Los Angeles Times

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Photographs by CAROLYN COLE Los Angeles Times

HISTORIC SNOWPACK levels in the Eastern Sierra Nevada are expected to melt into runoff that is 225% of normal, threatening operations at Owens Lake, above, and the Los Angeles Aqueduct, officials say.

With rising temperatures comes rising flood threat

Crews scramble to beef up defense along Los Angeles Aqueduct

By Louis Sahagún
REPORTING FROM OLANCHA, CALIF.

More than a month after heavy storms eroded a section of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, work crews are still scrambling to complete repairs and shore up flood defenses in the face of a weeklong heat wave that threatens to trigger widespread snowmelt in the Sierra Nevada.

"We're doing as much as we can, as quickly as possible," said Paul Liu, of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. "Our crews are working 12-hour shifts."

Historic snowpack levels in the Eastern Sierra are expected to melt into runoff that is 225% of normal, which translates to about 326 billion gallons of water that will need to be managed, DWP officials said.

And while a typical runoff season in the region can last from May to June, this year's "could push through to August," said Anselmo Collins, senior assistant general

[See **Aqueduct,** A8]

THOUSANDS of birds have taken advantage of new wetlands at the lake to rest and bulk up on brine flies before migrating.

Short-lived heat wave hits state

Brief hot spell is expected to bring some of the warmest days so far this year and will be followed by a cold front. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Disney lawsuit accuses DeSantis of retaliation

Media giant seeks control of resort area, says it's being targeted for protected speech.

By Meg James and Brian Contreras

Walt Disney Co. on Wednesday sued Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis in the latest salvo in a long-running fight over the company's self-governing powers in the area of the state that encompasses Walt Disney World Resort.

"A targeted campaign of government retaliation — orchestrated at every step by Gov. DeSantis as punishment for Disney's protected speech — now threatens Disney's business operations, jeopardizes its economic future in the region, and violates its constitutional rights," Disney said in a complaint filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida.

The Republican governor — who is widely expected to run for president in 2024 — has made his battle against Disney a cornerstone of his culture wars campaign, at times referring to the legendary California company as a "woke Burbank corporation."

The feud began last year after Disney spoke out against Florida's so-called Don't Say Gay legislation, which banned discussions on sexual orientation and gender identity in kindergarten through third grade. DeSantis has since pushed to expand the prohibition to all public school grades.

Disney, under pressure from employees, opposed the law, saying, "It could be used to unfairly target gay, lesbian, nonbinary and transgender kids and families." The company said it would reassess its political contributions.

DeSantis lashed out, launching a yearlong effort to strip Disney of its self-governing powers for its parks — sweeping privileges the company has enjoyed since 1967,

[See **Disney,** A11]

ALEX BRANDON Associated Press

FLORIDA Gov. Ron DeSantis' office calls the suit an attempt to undermine Florida voters' will.

Filing shows a bullying, bumbling governor

MICHAEL HILTZIK

No one needs to pay hard-earned cash to be entertained by a Disney product anymore.

Not as of Wednesday, when the giant entertainment conglomerate filed a federal lawsuit to quash the efforts of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to punish it for speaking out against DeSantis' "Don't Say Gay" law.

The 77-page legal complaint, filed in federal court in Gainesville, Fla., aims to stop what it terms "a targeted campaign of government retaliation — orchestrated at every step by Gov. DeSantis as punishment for Disney's protected speech."

That campaign, the lawsuit says, "threatens Disney's business operations, jeopardizes its economic future in the region, and violates its constitutional rights."

Whether Disney can make that claim stick in federal court is anyone's guess. But its filing makes a good case that the only thing that DeSantis and his entourage find objectionable about the company is its speech, and specifically its objection to the "Don't Say Gay" law.

DeSantis didn't complain about Disney in any way before that. He certainly didn't refuse Disney's $107,000 in contributions to his political campaigns. Nor did Florida Republicans refuse any of the $7.6 million in contributions they've received from the company over the last 20 years or so. They started copping an attitude about Disney only when they figured it would be a high-profile foil in their campaigns against "wokeness."

[See **Hiltzik,** A11]

RENA EFFENDI For The Times

A BUILDING in Istanbul undergoes demolition on the day a family from an adjacent block moved from the apartment they owned into a rented home.

No home away from home

In Istanbul, those who forsake earthquake death traps face another challenge: a housing shortage

By Hannah Lucinda Smith

ISTANBUL — From his second-story apartment on the western edge of Istanbul, Ismail Ciftsuren watched workers file past his window toward the building next door.

Demolition was about to start at the Cinar Residence, a complex of 13 apartment buildings, each six stories tall.

His building — his family's home for three decades — was due to be knocked down in late March, leaving just over a month to find somewhere else to live.

"The life here is finished," Ciftsuren, 74, declared.

His family was caught in a double crisis: Istanbul, much like Los Angeles, is facing a severe housing shortage and extreme earthquake risk.

The family worried about living in a building deemed unsafe in temblors. But the more immediate fear was of being forced to find a new home in a city where population growth and lack of land for building have sent real estate prices and rents soaring.

They and many of their neighbors had opposed a private developer's plan to replace their complex with luxury high-rises, continuing to resist even after a massive earthquake killed tens of thousands of people on the other side of the country. But they lost.

The sky was gray and it was drizzling as bulldozers arrived, the conclusion of a nearly yearlong legal battle.

Ciftsuren paced from room to room as the sounds of demolition from the building next door rolled through his floorboards and rattled

[See **Turkey,** A4]

Warnings didn't stop abuse of kids

Santa Monica has settled a slew of suits over molestations by civilian police staffer.

By Richard Winton

In nearly three decades as a civilian employee with the Santa Monica Police Department and the city, Eric Uller was considered a standout public servant who won awards for his technological innovations.

But his biggest claim to fame was his work as a volunteer in the Police Activities League, where, beginning in the late 1980s, he worked with boys and girls in the nonprofit's afterschool program.

Uller was a familiar face at the PAL center that served Santa Monica's Latino neighborhoods, often traveling in a police vehicle and befriending generations of youths.

It took decades to uncover that Uller was a sexual predator, the center of a stunning series of crimes that destroyed the lives of children and exposed grave questions as to why it took so long for authorities to uncover what he was doing.

Now, more than 200 people have come forward to say they were abused by Uller,

[See **Abuse,** A9]

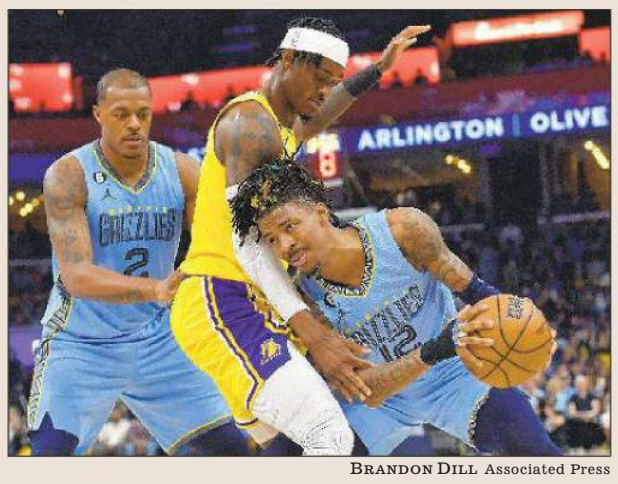
Ex-UCLA doctor gets 11-year term

Former gynecologist James Heaps was a noted cancer specialist who preyed on his patients. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

It's the return of the silver screen

At CinemaCon in Las Vegas, stars and studios say streaming is out and theaters are back in. **CALENDAR, E1**

Weather
Partly sunny.
L.A. Basin: 78/55. **B6**



BRANDON DILL Associated Press

LAKERS CAN'T FINISH

Ja Morant, right, of the Memphis Grizzlies leans into Jarred Vanderbilt of the Lakers in Game 5 of their NBA series, won by Memphis. **SPORTS, B12**

VISIT…

U.S., South Korea bolster alliance amid tensions

Spy leaks, trade issues and Washington's economic standoff with China remain as President Yoon visits.

By Courtney Subramanian and Tracy Wilkinson

Kent Nishimura Los Angeles Times

PRESIDENTS YOON Suk-yeol and Biden, in the Rose Garden on Wednesday, issued a joint declaration to extend their nations' alliance, warning North Korea that the U.S. will meet nuclear attacks in kind.

WASHINGTON — South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol has received the red-carpet treatment this week as Washington and Seoul mark the 70th anniversary of their alliance. Yoon's week-long itinerary features a high-profile summit with President Biden, a glittering state banquet — an honor reserved for America's closest allies — and a joint address to Congress.

But beneath the pomp and ceremony, thorny issues are at stake.

South Korean companies are worried about how Biden's efforts to promote American manufacturing and limit the growth of China's high-tech sector might affect them. And earlier this year, a leak of classified Pentagon documents revealed details of U.S. espionage against South Korea, embarrassing both countries and causing political headaches for Yoon.

Both countries are also hoping to counter North Korea's aggressive missile testing. The two leaders unveiled a new agreement Wednesday to bolster extended deterrence — the idea that the U.S. will defend its allies with its full military capabilities, including nuclear weapons — in response to mounting threats from North Korea.

Called the Washington Declaration, the agreement will give South Korea more insight and input into U.S. military planning and strengthen training between the two nations in exchange for Seoul's commitment to not develop its own nuclear weapons.

The U.S. will also send a ballistic missile submarine on routine visits to South Korea for the first time since the 1980s as a visible demonstration of U.S. military might.

Biden called the nations' alliance "ironclad" and delivered a stark warning to Pyongyang during a joint news conference Wednesday afternoon in the White House Rose Garden.

"A nuclear attack by North Korea against the United States or its allies and partners is unacceptable and will result in the end of whatever regime were to take such an action," he said, adding that the U.S. remained open to diplomatic talks to "bolster stability on the peninsula."

Yoon vowed to respond to any nuclear attack "swiftly, overwhelmingly and decisively using the full force of the alliance, including U.S. nuclear weapons."

The two leaders rolled out a suite of other initiatives to cooperate on cybersecurity, economic investments and other areas to further solidify the alliance in the face of North Korea's record number of nuclear missile tests this year.

Yoon's visit is a "springboard for connecting Korea to this broader web of alliance relationships in the region, whether we're talking about security cooperation [or] economic security issues ... and interacting with other stakeholders in the region, including Southeast Asian countries and Pacific Islands," said Nicholas Szechenyi, deputy director for Asia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank.

Yoon, a conservative politician who came to office last year, has made fortifying military and diplomatic ties with the U.S. a centerpiece of his foreign policy.

He has resumed joint military exercises with the United States, coordinated with the U.S. to decrease reliance on China for global supply chains and, more critically, thawed relations with Japan despite a bitter historical dispute over Korean forced labor during Tokyo's colonial rule — a decision that prompted domestic backlash.

At Wednesday's news conference, Biden thanked him for his "political courage and personal commitment to diplomacy with Japan."

While North Korea is a priority and a perennial issue for the U.S. and South Korea that both countries are aligned on, "the subtext is China," according to Victor Cha, Korea chair at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

As Washington intensifies its economic confrontation with Beijing, Biden is working to shore up U.S. influence throughout the Indo-Pacific region. He will host Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. at the White House next week, and is set to travel to Japan for the Group of 7 summit in Hiroshima on May 19-21.

Biden has tried to quiet South Korean companies' concerns about their ineligibility for subsidies under his Inflation Reduction Act, which provides tax credits for electric vehicles that are assembled in North America or include key components that are sourced domestically.

Before Yoon arrived at the White House, General Motors and South Korea's Hyundai announced billions in new investment to produce electric vehicle battery cells in the U.S. with South Korean battery makers.

But Biden also faces friction over the $50-billion CHIPS and Science Act. The law gives federal funds to semiconductor manufacturers that agree to limit advanced chip production in China over the next 10 years. U.S. export controls on computer chip equipment designed to choke China's access to the advanced technology have also rankled Seoul. Japan and the Netherlands have imposed similar restrictions.

South Korean companies Samsung and SK Hynix received a one-year exemption from the U.S. export ban, but a solution will have to be negotiated when it expires in October.

"South Korea is very much reliant on its semiconductor industry as part of its broader economic strength, and that industry is heavily invested in China," said Frank Aum, an expert on Northeastern Asia at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

Yoon is under pressure to return from his visit to the White House with further assurance of Washington's dedication to trade arrangements and defense against the nuclear-armed Pyongyang as he looks to smooth over relations following the leak of classified U.S. documents.

The leaked intelligence showed that top South Korean officials were concerned that ammunition South Korea sold to the U.S. would wind up in Ukraine, violating Seoul's policy of not supplying lethal aid to countries in conflict. The revelation prompted criticism among South Koreans, but White House officials have brushed off any tensions caused by the breach.

Yoon told reporters the two nations were "communicating and sharing necessary information," but declined to say whether Biden had provided him any assurances.

Scott Snyder, senior fellow for Korea studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, said that today's relationship with Seoul has to be "an alliance powered by chips, batteries and clean technology," but that there are "drag" issues that complicate ties, including the leaked Pentagon documents and the South Korean public's reluctance to get involved in Ukraine.

"It's a little bit ironic, because I think that the alliance is probably at its highest point that it's been, maybe in the [70-year] history of the alliance, in terms of intensity and depth of coordination and ... breadth of scope," Snyder said. "And yet, at the same time, there are these underlying issues of trust that are there that could trip things up and might have a negative impact on President Yoon's public approval."

Yoon began his six-day visit on Tuesday by touring a NASA facility with Vice President Kamala Harris, and later laid a wreath at the Korean War Veterans Memorial with his wife, Kim Keon-hee, Biden and First Lady Jill Biden.

He also met with Netflix co-Chief Executive Ted Sarandos, who announced the streaming giant would invest $2.5 billion in Korean entertainment over the next four years.

Yoon is expected to meet with studio executives from Disney, Sony Pictures and others at the Motion Picture Assn. headquarters in Washington on Thursday.

"It's a new frontier for the alliance," Cha said, "beyond the sort of traditional security and free trade components of the relationship."

For this mother, Ralph Yarl could have been her son

Shooting of Black teen who went to wrong house causes Kansas City woman to fear for her own kids.

By Kia Breaux

Charlie Riedel Associated Press

LONGTIME journalist Kia Breaux, right, plays with her sons Jaden, 14, left, and John, 17, in front of their home in a predominantly white area of Kansas City, Mo.

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — On April 13, the nightmare that I'd worried about ever since we moved into our neighborhood came true.

That was the day that I learned 16-year-old Ralph Yarl was shot after mistakenly ringing a doorbell at the wrong house while trying to pick up his younger brothers from a play date. And even as I anguished over what happened to him, one thing kept echoing in my mind: It could have been my child.

John, my older son, is 17 and attends the same high school as Ralph did. It's common for me to ask John to pick up his 14-year-old brother, Jaden, from various extracurricular activities. I've been cautious about what I ask John to do and where I ask him to go. I don't know what might happen if he crosses paths with someone who feels threatened by the color of his skin.

That's because the suburbs of Kansas City north of the Missouri River have long held a reputation of not being the most welcoming to Black families. While I've adjusted to the awkward stares and subtle racism, I've always had a nagging fear that something bad could happen if my sons ventured too far from home without me.

I became painfully aware that John shared that fear shortly after Ahmaud Arbery was gunned down by white men while jogging through a Georgia neighborhood in 2020. Like Arbery, John liked to jog through the neighborhood. Now, however, he was asking me to trail him in my car as he jogged through ours.

I felt like I'd failed as a mother. I had done everything I could to make him feel safe and protected, but he was afraid to run past the familiar, well-manicured lawns in the only neighborhood he's ever known as home.

I knew there would be challenges when we moved in as one of the only Black families in the subdivision in 2005. But I figured the benefits would outweigh the drawbacks. Besides, you can't run or hide from racism.

My ex-husband and I bought our home when John was just 6 weeks old — three years before Staley High School opened — because we wanted our children to receive a quality education. Our real estate agent touted plans for the state-of-the-art high school campus as a selling point. We loved the layout of the home on a half-acre of land, and the sprawling backyard was perfect for the Irish setter we had at the time.

Some neighbors welcomed us with housewarming gifts of flowers and baked goods. Later, we were told that one family sold their house shortly after we moved in because they didn't want to live near Black people. At a party at a neighbor's house not long after that, a guest wondered out loud why Black people would want to live in a predominantly white neighborhood. "Wouldn't they feel more comfortable living around their own people?"

Then there was the time I sent my then-husband to return a casserole dish a neighbor had left at my house after a party. The former neighbor, whom we'd known for years at that point, opened the door and yelled, "We don't want any. Go away," and slammed the door. She didn't take the time to make out the face on the other side of the door. She just saw Black. She apologized profusely when she realized what she had done.

It touched John from very early on too. He was in kindergarten when I had to confront some of the realities of raising a Black child in this predominantly white suburb. Silly me. I thought I'd have more time to prepare.

We were home one evening when I overheard John yell at the TV during a game of Wii boxing. "Take that, you jigaboo!" He could tell by my face that the word was more than a casual insult aimed at his virtual opponent. It took a while for me to coax out of him that a white kid at school had called him that name.

How do you explain to a 5-year-old why someone would call him that? I fumbled through it just as I've learned to fumble through raising my Black sons in an environment where their skin is considered by some to be a weapon.

These things happen. You block them out and you move on, but the subtle tension remains. No one wants to talk about it. Eventually you become numb. You avoid certain situations. It's like walking on eggshells to avoid a land mine.

It becomes exhausting to try to shield my sons from the ugliness I know exists. John is dating now. If he plans to ask a white girl out, I always ask: "Do her parents know you are Black? Are they OK with it?"

When I heard what happened to Ralph, I cried. I haven't slept well since, because it could have easily been John who was shot in the head after mistakenly going to NE 115th Street instead of NE 115th Terrace to pick up his brothers.

Ralph's mistake was an innocent one. In my neighborhood, address mix-ups happen all the time. Many houses are numbered identically, and sometimes the only difference in a street address is "terrace" versus "street" or "northwest" versus "northeast."

We recently had a string of unexpected visits. Just after dawn one morning, we were awakened to men we didn't hire inspecting tree damage in our backyard after a storm. A few days later, workers for a lawn-care company let themselves into our backyard to treat it for grubs.

The most troubling incident came when a man we didn't know rang our doorbell in the middle of the day.

My husband and I, both working from home, couldn't answer right away. By the time we got to the door, the man was in our backyard and fumbling around our back door. When my husband confronted him, he told us he was a contractor sent to measure our door for a replacement. We hadn't ordered a door.

So it's easy for me to see how mistakes happen. But it never occurred to me to grab my firearm and shoot these unexpected visitors. That simply isn't the first option in the world that I'm working so hard to create for my family.

Since Ralph's shooting, I've had a lot of friends check on us. My best friend, who lives in St. Louis, pointed out that Ralph looks a lot like Jaden, my younger son. I'd noticed the resemblance too. I cried again.

I don't regret moving here. My sons have outstanding teachers and coaches. They've excelled academically and developed valuable friendships with a diverse group of young people. I've met some of my closest friends in this neighborhood.

Yet as a Black woman in America, I rise each day knowing that I will invariably face small indignities tossed my way by white people who mistakenly believe they're entitled to dismiss me because of my race.

I haven't been called the N-word, nor have I been physically accosted. Racism in this part of the city is far more subtle, and if you're not acutely aware of what to look for, it blows right past you.

I won't say I'm used to misguided attempts to marginalize my presence, because I won't accept being treated like I'm less than anyone else. But when it happens, I'm rarely surprised.

And I'll also admit: It's tiring for my family to have to go out of its way to make white people feel comfortable with our Blackness. We can't peel off our skin; not that we would if we could. Everyone wants to proclaim, "I don't see color," when, in fact, that's the first thing that they see when they see my sons. It's hard to miss the only Black kid on the baseball diamond.

But on the playing field, at least, my boys generally get the benefit of the doubt that Ralph Yarl wasn't given on that fateful night earlier this month.

Longtime Associated Press journalist Kia Breaux is currently Midwest regional sales director for the AP, based in Kansas City.

THE WORLD

Zelensky expresses optimism after call with Xi

China appoints envoy to facilitate peace talks. But analysts see dim prospects for end to Russia-Ukraine war.

By David Rising and Joe McDonald

Domenico Stinellis Associated Press

UKRAINIAN President Volodymyr Zelensky said his phone call with his Chinese counterpart was "productive." Above, he addresses a meeting in Rome via video.

KYIV, Ukraine — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he and Chinese leader Xi Jinping had a "long and meaningful" phone conversation Wednesday, their first known contact since Russia's invasion of Ukraine more than a year ago, and Beijing appointed an envoy to pursue a "political settlement."

The hourlong call came two months after Beijing, which has long been aligned with Russia, said it wanted to act as a peace mediator in the war against Ukraine and after Xi visited Moscow last month. It also came as Ukraine readies its forces for an expected spring counteroffensive.

Zelensky was upbeat about the phone call, which offered him the chance to insert his views into what had been a bilateral dialogue between Moscow and Beijing. Russian President Vladimir Putin is eager to keep Xi close as a counterweight to the U.S., which has sided with Ukraine.

"I believe that this call, as well as the appointment of Ukraine's ambassador to China, will give a powerful impetus to the development of our bilateral relations," Zelensky said in a Facebook post.

An official readout on his website called the conversation "productive" and said it leads the way toward "possible interaction with the aim of establishing a just and sustainable peace for Ukraine."

Zelensky emphasized the need to regain all Ukrainian lands and stated, "There can be no peace at the expense of territorial compromises." In an indirect reference to U.S. reports that China had considered supplying weapons to Russia for its war, Zelensky's office said he asked countries to refrain from doing so because "any support — even partial — is converted by Russia into the continuation of its aggression, into its further rejection of peace." China has said it won't supply weapons to either side in the conflict.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said Beijing's "core stance is to facilitate talks for peace," announcing that an envoy — a former ambassador to Russia — would visit Ukraine in pursuit of a "political settlement."

The statement struck a positive tone, giving a nod to Kyiv's insistence that its territory cannot be broken up by Russia's annexations of land while making clear that Beijing values its longstanding ties with Ukraine.

"Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is the political foundation of China-Ukraine relations," the statement said. "China's readiness to develop relations with Ukraine is consistent and clear-cut. No matter how the international situation evolves, China will work with Ukraine to advance mutually beneficial cooperation."

Analysts expressed skepticism about the prospects for peace.

The call balances China's dialogue with Russia by showing it is "recognizing Ukraine's leadership and indicating Ukraine is an important entity," said political science professor Kimberly Marten of Barnard College at Columbia University in New York.

But, she added in an interview with the Associated Press, unless undisclosed details reveal otherwise, "it's a nonstarter. It's pro-Russian. I would not guess that this holds a lot of significance for ending the war."

She noted the Chinese statement didn't call for Russia to leave occupied areas or brand Russia as an aggressor, and refers to the situation as "a crisis, rather than a war."

Elizabeth Wishnick, of the U.S.-based think tank CNA and Columbia University's Weatherhead East Asian Institute, noted in an email that the Chinese statement about the call contains "no mention of a Russian troop withdrawal, which, to my mind, makes this a less than serious initiative and unlikely to contribute in any major way to ending the war, which will likely be decided on the battlefield."

In Moscow, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova commended China's approach, praising Beijing's "readiness to strive to establish a [peace] negotiations process," while slamming what she called Kyiv's "rejection of any sound initiatives aimed at a settlement."

The White House described it as a positive development, allowing Xi to hear Ukraine's view of the "illegal, unprovoked invasion."

"We think that's a good thing," White House National Security Council spokesman John F. Kirby said.

Talks between the two leaders had been anticipated for weeks, after China produced a 12-point proposal to end the war, although it did not contain details.

Russia and Ukraine are far apart in their terms for peace. The Kremlin wants Kyiv to acknowledge Russia's annexation of the Crimean peninsula and of the Ukrainian provinces of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia, which most nations have denounced as illegal. Ukraine has rejected the demands and ruled out any talks with Russia until its troops pull back from all occupied territories.

Zelensky said in an interview with the Associated Press in late March that he hadn't spoken with Xi since the war began and extended an invitation for him to visit Ukraine.

China has announced that it is keen to act as mediator in the war, which has reenergized NATO.

With the step, Xi's government reinforced China's claim to being neutral in the war, despite blocking efforts at the United Nations to condemn the Kremlin's invasion.

Whereas Zelensky has moved his country closer to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and persuaded alliance members to send Ukraine sophisticated modern weapons to help defeat Russia, Beijing has echoed the Kremlin line in accusing the West of provoking the conflict and "fanning the flames" by providing Ukraine with defensive arms.

In February, when China called for a cease-fire and peace talks between Ukraine and Russia, Zelensky cautiously welcomed Beijing's involvement. But he said success would depend on actions, not words.

Last month, Putin warmly welcomed Xi to the Kremlin, in what was seen as a powerful message to Western leaders that their efforts to isolate Moscow over the fighting in Ukraine have fallen short.

Meanwhile, Zelensky on Wednesday used the 37th anniversary of the world's worst nuclear disaster to repeat his warnings about the potential threat of a new atomic catastrophe in Ukraine amid the war with Russia.

Zelensky drew a parallel between the April 26, 1986, Chernobyl nuclear disaster and Moscow's brief seizure of the plant and its radiation-contaminated exclusion zone after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

"Last year, the occupier not only seized the [Chernobyl] nuclear power plant, but also endangered the entire world again," Zelensky said in a post in English on the messaging app Telegram

Elsewhere, Ukrainian and Russian officials announced the latest prisoner exchange, saying 44 Ukrainian and 40 Russian POWs were released this week. The head of the Ukrainian presidential office, Andriy Yermak, said on Telegram that the Ukrainians included soldiers, sailors, border and national guards, and two civilians.

The head of the southeastern Zaporizhzhia Regional Military Administration, Yurii Malashko, said that overnight the Russians struck 19 civilian areas with artillery, rocket and drone attacks and one airstrike.

At least two civilians were killed and 13 others were wounded in Ukraine on Tuesday and overnight into Wednesday, the Ukrainian presidential office said.

Also, an Italian journalist in Ukraine, Corrado Zunino, was injured and his interpreter Bogdan Bitik killed in the southern city of Kherson.

Rising and McDonald write for the Associated Press.

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Nowhere to go after fleeing quake risk

[**Turkey,** from A1]

his wife's keepsakes on the mantel. Some neighbors were already packing up, dragging suitcases over walkways littered with broken glass.

But with nowhere else to go, Ciftsuren and his family had little choice but to stay put as long as they could.

"If we could, we would be out of here tomorrow," he said.

::

The population of Istanbul was 8 million in 1996, the year Ciftsuren and his wife, Bediye, arrived from their impoverished hometown of Mardin, 680 miles to the east, and moved into their airy two-bedroom corner apartment.

"It was a green area, calm," said Ciftsuren, who toiled for decades in manual labor jobs and spent his entire savings to buy the apartment for just over $14,000.

Today 16 million people live in the city, and the neighborhood, perched on the eastern shore of Lake Kucukcekmece, is rapidly gentrifying as older buildings are torn down and replaced with gleaming new ones.

Now Ciftsuren and his wife, also 74, scrape by on his government pension while thanking God for having made them homeowners long ago.

Ciftsuren first heard that developers were circling Cinar Residence seven years ago, but the apartment owners repeatedly voted against their offers. Then in May last year, the complex failed an earthquake test requested by one of its residents.

Under the disaster zoning law, that meant the buildings either had to be fortified or torn down.

With little financing for retrofitting, the owners began considering offers from developers, including Sega Construction, a local firm that proposed replacing the complex with five 15-floor towers holding more than 500 units. When the project was complete, each of the 240 displaced owners would receive a new apartment, and Sega would make its money by selling the rest.

A total of 200 homeowners voted in favor of the plan — well above the two-thirds required by law for the project to proceed.

Some of the holdouts took the developer to court, claiming that the earthquake test was bogus and that the company was in cahoots with some of their neighbors. The court halted the plans so it could examine the claims.

The Ciftsurens did not join the lawsuit — they didn't have the money to contribute for the lawyer — but they opposed redevelopment.

Though they would receive a new apartment, the monthly fees would be far beyond what they could afford. More importantly, redevelopment would permanently displace renters, including two of their children, who lived in separate apartments upstairs with their own families.

Photographs by Rena Effendi For The Times

ISMAIL CIFTSUREN helps pack up the Istanbul apartment that he and his family have called home for 27 years. Their building failed an earthquake stress test and was designated to be torn down in March.

THE CIFTSURENS at home. Ismail Ciftsuren toiled for decades in manual labor jobs and spent all of his savings to buy his apartment for just over $14,000.

"These buildings are strong!" Ciftsuren said. "One time a handyman said he couldn't drill into the wall, it is so strong. I have no idea why the engineers have decided it's dangerous."

Everyone in the complex was awaiting a court ruling in early February when a magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck southern Turkey and northern Syria, leveling cities and killing more than 50,000 people.

The epicenter was 600 miles from Istanbul, which suffered no damage. But the scenes of devastation set off a panic. The city sits on a major fault line, and with many buildings constructed to subpar standards, more than a quarter of residents are thought to be at risk of sustaining severe damage to their homes in a major quake.

FAMILY MEMBERS unpack at the home the Ciftsurens rented just before their apartment was razed.

The city has since received more than 100,000 requests for inspections. Scores of buildings have already been condemned as residents scramble for new places to live and developers angle for opportunities to build.

Television news crews soon arrived at Cinar Residence, reporting that the complex was an example of the scores of death-trap buildings across the city.

One of the Ciftsurens' daughters, Nesime, who lived in another complex nearby, accused the pro-redevelopment neighbors of calling the media.

"They used it as propaganda," she said.

A week later, on Feb. 23, the court ruled that the demolition should proceed, concluding from an expert witness report that the earthquake test had been valid.

That was the day the bulldozers arrived.

::

Over the last two years, average rents in Istanbul have more than quintupled amid competition from newly arrived exiles from Syria and Afghanistan and more recently from Russia and Ukraine.

Now thousands of people displaced by the Feb. 6 earthquake were pouring into the city.

Sega was offering each apartment owner at Cinar Residence $115 a month to cover rental costs during construction. But when Ciftsuren searched online for places nearby, the cheapest he could find was $310 — his entire pension. The developer offered to buy him out for $100,000, but that was far too little for an apartment anywhere in Istanbul.

Ciftsuren and his wife considered returning to Mardin, where houses were far cheaper, but Bediye could not bear the thought of leaving her family.

As the clock ticked, the demolition crew stripped the windows and doors from other buildings. The complex was now mostly deserted. A handwritten sign warned off thieves.

On March 20, the Ciftsurens learned that demolition of their building would begin in seven days. Ciftsuren packed their rugs into huge plastic sacks and his wife folded their clothes into suitcases.

> Ciftsuren and his wife considered returning to Mardin, where houses were far cheaper, but Bediye could not bear the thought of leaving her family.

"They told us not to remove the doors," she said. "But these doors are ours, and they're good. I want to take them with me."

The head of the complex's management committee, Semsi Acik, was perplexed as to why some residents were still holding out.

"They must be stupid; why are they still refusing?" he told a foreman who had swung by his office to take a break.

Soon the Ciftsurens and their children were the only ones left in their building. Bediye managed to distract herself with a visit from her grandchildren — until she looked out the window.

"Everything is gone, everything destroyed," she cried.

Then four days before the scheduled demolition of his building, Ciftsuren found a new listing online: a two-bedroom house just down the road. It was $520 a month, but it was big enough that he figured his daughter Elif and her husband — who were being displaced from the Cinar Residence — could move in and help share the rent.

"There's a lot of interest," the landlord told him. "I don't know. I've got a family from Kahramanmaras" — a city leveled in the earthquake — "asking about it too."

The landlord appeared to be holding out for more money, but after some back and forth, he said the Ciftsurens could have the house.

::

On Sunday, March 26, they woke up before dawn.

Bediye wept as she watched her life's possessions emptying from their home. All of it looked so small when it was packed up, while her home seemed huge and cold. They could not take the doors, Ciftsuren told her gently. They had nowhere to store them.

Several other buildings in the area had also been condemned, and local moving companies had hiked their rates. The Ciftsurens gathered their extended family and moved everything themselves, the men and their furniture navigating a bend in the flight of stairs while the women pulled suitcases.

They struggled down the narrow road, back and forth four times to their new home less than a quarter of a mile away.

By lunchtime their old apartment was empty, and Bediye closed the door for the last time. Ciftsuren took a last look around the place where he had spent a third of his life. "I won't be back here again," he said.

His plan was to sell the new apartment they would receive and use the money to buy somewhere else in the city. Their children were being priced out everywhere in Istanbul and were considering cheaper cities.

For now, the family had little choice but to try to settle into the rental.

The old two-story house was one of the last of its kind in the neighborhood, sandwiched between new towers with signs advertising units for sale. The wallpaper was peeling and cracks in the walls were caked with dirt.

With some care it could be brought to life, Bediye thought. She could serve tea once the kitchen was cleaned, and there was a small frontyard where her grandchildren could play.

"When it is finished, it will be like a different place," she said.

She did her best to put aside another worry. The previous tenants had moved out and left Istanbul after the February quake because they feared this house was also unsafe. The Ciftsurens knew that it was also likely to fail a building test — and that if that happened, they would have to leave again.

Smith is a special correspondent.

Reporting partnership

This article was produced in partnership with the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

Francis allows women to vote at synod

Under pope's changes, 5 religious sisters and dozens of others will have balloting rights.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis has decided to give women the right to vote at an upcoming meeting of bishops, a historic reform that reflects his hopes to give women greater decision-making responsibilities and laypeople more say in the life of the Catholic Church.

The pontiff approved changes to the norms governing the Synod of Bishops, a Vatican body that gathers the world's bishops together for periodic meetings, after years of demands by women to have the right to vote.

The Vatican on Wednesday published the modifications he approved, which emphasize his vision for the lay faithful taking on a greater role in church affairs that have long been left to clerics, bishops and cardinals.

Catholic women's groups that have long criticized the Vatican for treating women as second-class citizens immediately praised the move as historic in the 2,000-year life of the church.

"This is a significant crack in the stained-glass ceiling, and the result of sustained advocacy, activism and the witness" of a campaign of Catholic women's groups demanding the right to vote, said Kate McElwee of the Women's Ordination Conference, which advocates for women priests.

Ever since the Second Vatican Council, the 1960s meetings that modernized the church, popes have summoned the world's bishops to Rome for a few weeks at a time to debate particular topics. At the end of the meetings, the bishops vote on specific proposals and put them to the pope, who then produces a document taking their views into account.

Until now, the only people who could vote were men. But under the new changes, five religious sisters will join five priests as voting representatives for religious orders. In addition, Francis has decided to appoint 70 nonbishop members of the synod and has asked that half of them be women. They too will have a vote.

The aim is also to include young people among these 70 nonbishop members, who will be proposed by regional blocs, with Francis making a final decision.

"It's an important change, it's not a revolution," said Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, a top organizer of the synod.

The next meeting, scheduled for Oct. 4-29, is focused on the very topic of making the church more reflective of, and responsive to, the laity, a process known as "synodality" that Francis has championed for years.

The October meeting has been preceded by an unprecedented two-year canvassing of the lay Catholic faithful about their vision for the church and how it can better respond to the needs of Catholics today.

So far only one woman is known to be a voting member of that October meeting, Sister Nathalie Becquart, a French nun who is undersecretary in the Vatican's Synod of Bishops office. When she was appointed to the position in 2021, she called Francis "brave" for having pushed the envelope on women's participation.

By the end of next month, seven regional blocs will propose 20 names apiece of nonbishop members to Francis, who will select 10 names apiece to bring the total to 70.

Cardinal Mario Grech, who is in charge of the synod, stressed that with the changes, some 21% of the gathered representatives at the October meeting will be nonbishops, with half of that group women.

"Change is normal in life and history," Hollerich told reporters.

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‘Donald Trump raped me,’ writer testifies at trial

E. Jean Carroll tells a jury of alleged assault in 1996. The former president calls civil case a ‘Witch Hunt.’

By Jennifer Peltz and Michael R. Sisak

Seth Wenig Associated Press

FORMER ADVICE columnist E. Jean Carroll, center, arrives at court in New York. Her lawsuit against former President Trump seeks unspecified damages and a retraction of his allegedly defamatory comments.

NEW YORK — At first, she thought helping Donald Trump shop for a women’s lingerie gift at a luxury department store would simply be “a funny New York thing.”

Even when, according to E. Jean Carroll, the then-businessman motioned her to a dressing room as they dared each other to try on a see-through bodysuit, she imagined something like a “Saturday Night Live” sketch she’d written.

But soon, “my whole reason for being alive in that moment was to get out of that room,” Carroll testified Wednesday in the trial of her rape lawsuit.

“I’m here because Donald Trump raped me, and when I wrote about it, he said it didn’t happen. He lied and shattered my reputation, and I’m here to try and get my life back,” Carroll told jurors.

As she took the stand to describe the alleged 1996 attack, former President Trump, from afar, repeated his insistence that Carroll’s claim is utter fiction, calling the case “a made-up scam.”

“This is a fraudulent & false story — Witch Hunt!” Trump wrote on his social media platform, Truth Social. His comments prompted the judge to warn Trump’s lawyers that he could bring more legal problems upon himself.

Trump hasn’t attended the trial thus far, but his lawyers said Tuesday he still could decide to testify.

The trial comes as Trump again seeks the Republican nomination for president, and weeks after he pleaded not guilty to unrelated criminal charges that involve payments allegedly made to silence a porn actor who said she had a sexual encounter with him.

Carroll, a 79-year-old former advice columnist, was largely matter-of-fact on the witness stand — so much so that after she wept while telling jurors that “being able to get my day in court is everything to me,” she rapidly composed herself and declined to take a break.

“I’m not going to sit here and cry and waste everybody’s time,” she said.

Carroll testified that she crossed paths with Trump at Bergdorf Goodman on an unspecified Thursday evening in spring 1996. At the time, she was writing a long-running advice column in Elle magazine, having also written for “SNL.” Trump was a real estate magnate and social figure in New York.

She said he asked her advice about selecting a gift for a woman, and she was delighted to oblige. As an advice columnist, to have Trump ask for gift guidance “was a wonderful prospect,” and Carroll figured she would end up with a funny story, she said.

She testified that she suggested a hat, but he pivoted to lingerie, and soon they were bantering about the bodysuit. Amused and flirting with him, she went along, laughing even as he closed the door to the dressing room, perhaps even as he pushed her against a wall.

But then, she alleges, Trump stamped his mouth onto hers, yanked down her tights and shoved his hand and then his penis inside her while she struggled against him.

She said she finally kneed him off her, fled and, for years, blamed herself.

Carroll said that for decades, she told no one except two friends because she was afraid Trump would retaliate, because she “thought it was my fault” and because she thought many people blame rape victims for what happened to them.

The alleged attack happened long before the #MeToo movement forced a reckoning with how sexual assault victims are treated by law enforcement and the public. Carroll has said #MeToo fueled her decision to come forward in a 2019 memoir and accompanying magazine excerpt.

The Associated Press typically does not name people who say they have been sexually assaulted unless they come forward publicly, as Carroll has done.

Trump, 76, has said he wasn’t at the store with Carroll and had no clue who she was when she first aired the story publicly.

He has said she was “totally lying” and has called the case a “hoax,” a “lie” and a “complete con job.”

Trump’s comments launched a “staggering” onslaught of hateful and occasionally threatening messages toward her, according to Carroll, whose suit also includes a defamation claim.

As court was about to begin Wednesday, Trump used Truth Social to vent his feelings again about the case and alluded to a DNA issue that Judge Lewis A. Kaplan has ruled can’t be part of the case.

Kaplan wasn’t pleased. Trump, the judge said, appeared to be addressing his supporters and the jury “about stuff that has no business being spoken about.” Kaplan called Trump’s post “a public statement that, on the face of it, seems entirely inappropriate.”

Trump attorney Joe Tacopina noted that jurors are told not to follow any news or online commentary about the case. But he said he would ask Trump “to refrain from any further posts about this case.”

“I hope you’re more successful,” Kaplan said, adding that Trump “may or may not be tampering with a new source of potential liability.”

Carroll is due to continue testifying Thursday, when Trump’s lawyers probably will get their chance to question her. Her federal lawsuit seeks unspecified damages and a retraction of his allegedly defamatory comments. She never pursued criminal charges.

Meanwhile, the judge decided Wednesday that the trial won’t delve into funding that Carroll’s lawyers got from American Future Republic, an organization funded by LinkedIn cofounder Reid Hoffman.

Trump’s lawyers had argued that the money raised questions about Carroll’s credibility. Kaplan concluded there was “nothing there” and, after hearing that Trump’s son Eric had just tweeted criticism of the funding, he again advised Tacopina to speak with Donald Trump.

Tacopina has asserted that Carroll sued to get money and try to punish Trump politically. Carroll, a registered Democrat, testified that she voted for his Democratic opponents in 2016 and 2020 but said that has nothing to do with her lawsuit.

“I’m not settling a political score at all. I’m settling a personal score,” she said.

Peltz and Sisak write for the Associated Press.

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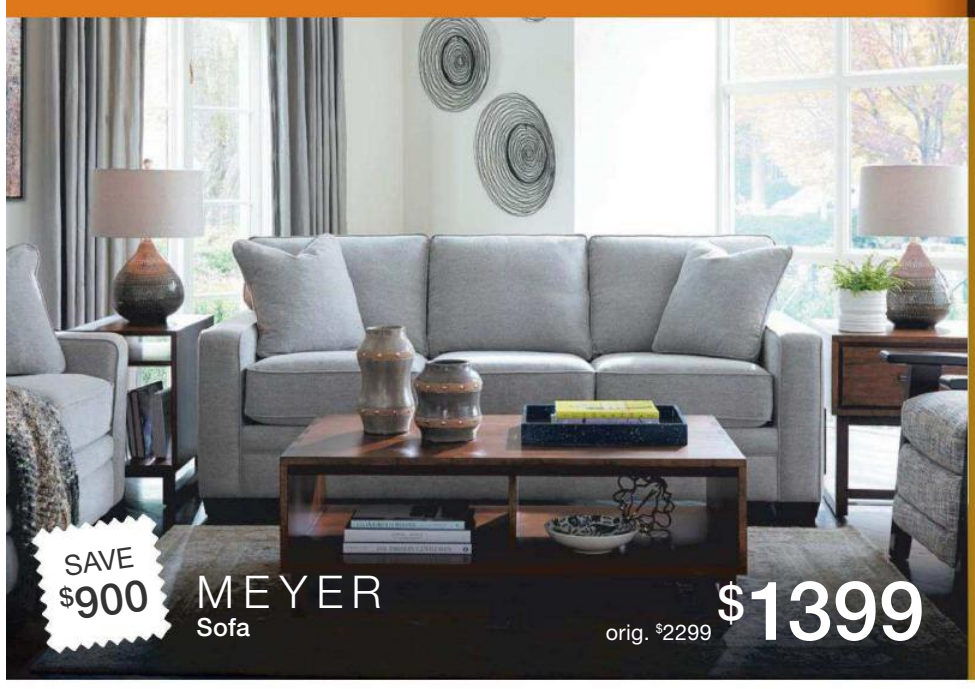

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Race to repair aqueduct as flood threat rises

[**Aqueduct,** from A1]
manager of the DWP's water system.

The DWP has already begun emptying reservoirs to create more storage space for the roughly 130 billion gallons of water expected to make its way to Los Angeles this spring and summer via the aqueduct — potentially enough to meet 80% of L.A.'s annual demand.

The hope is that most of the snow on the mountains stays frozen long enough to give DWP, Inyo County, state, and federal disaster officials enough time to prepare for widespread flooding expected when summer temperatures soar.

L.A.'s water lifeline to Owens Valley has never before faced such a long-term flood threat. The vulnerability of the century-old system was brought into sharp focus on March 10, when storm flooding destroyed a 120-foot section of the aqueduct near Olancha.

It was the first time in history that the 200-mile aqueduct had been breached by extreme weather, threatening water deliveries to 4 million ratepayers in Los Angeles.

To drain, dry and repair the breach, DWP crews first opened aqueduct floodgates 25 miles to the north.

Those releases, however, transformed the alkaline lake bed into a churning floodplain of corrosive flows that battered diversion systems, chewed through 18 miles of roads and berms, and encroached on pumping stations and high-voltage electrical infrastructure that would take millions of dollars and several years to replace, officials said.

Now, with forecasters predicting the state's first heat wave of the season, there's little time to rest for the crews using earthmovers, excavators and cranes to reinforce damaged berms with rocks and boulders, and to surround vulnerable roads and critical infrastructure with K-rail barrier walls.

Adam Perez, manager of the aqueduct, said the DWP is "considering seeking reimbursements from the California Office of Emergency Services to help cover the millions of dollars it took to repair the breach in March."

Among the infrastructure at stake is $2.5 billion worth of dust control systems the city of Los Angeles has been required to install to fight hazardous dust pollution — an environmental consequence of L.A.'s draining of Owens Lake more than a century ago.

"Most of the repair work will be completed by June," said Liu, who heads the DWP's dust control program. "But with all that snow still up there in the mountains, our crews may be out here a lot longer than that."

It's not all bad news. The clank and roar of heavy machinery hasn't deterred tens of thousands of waterfowl, gulls and shorebirds from taking advantage of dozens of square miles of new, inadvertently created wetlands to rest and bulk up on brine flies before completing their migratory journeys to breeding grounds as far north as the Arctic.

But elsewhere in Owens Valley, a gash of high desert between the Sierra Nevada and the White and Inyo mountains, DWP officials and property owners see signs of concern lurking in ponds, lakes, creeks, irrigation canals and fields that are already brimming with snow melt.

Drought, wildfires, flooding and heavy snow are nothing new in the Eastern Sierra. But this year the region is mirroring patterns of extreme weather worldwide.

The April 29 trout season opener at Crowley Lake is typically a spectacle with fishing enthusiasts in boats trolling in every direction.

But as of April 21, the lake was still frozen and the only boating concession on the lake announced that it was "safe to expect delays of at least a week."

"This is an unprecedented situation," said Abby Thomason, owner and general manager of Crowley Lake Fish Camp. "We will take things day by day; if the lake thaws, we will open, but we can't say when that will be."

Inyo National Forest officials announced last week that "to protect public and safety, and natural resources," it was closing several lower-elevation dirt roads "due to storm damage and prediction of spring snowmelt runoff impacting them further."

"We know everyone is anxious to get outside and start enjoying springtime adventures on the Inyo," said Scott Kusumoto, acting director of the Inyo National Forest, "and we're doing everything we can to make repairs and reopen roads as conditions allow."

The challenge now is to prevent the bounty of Sierra snowmelt expected to course through the aqueduct this spring and summer from overflowing, inundating the lake bed, as well as fields, homes and businesses.

DWP activities have elicited concern in Owens Valley since the turn of the 20th century, when Los Angeles agents posed as ranchers and farmers to buy land and water rights in the area, then began building an aqueduct to collect and divert water that had sustained Owens Lake for 800,000 years.

By 1926, the diversions that began in 1913 had dried up most of Owens Lake, triggering immense wind-blown sheets of powder-fine lung-damaging particles that descended on towns downwind.

Under a court order, the DWP has spent more than $2.5 billion over the last three decades transforming the lake's grim heritage with dust control projects including shallow flooding that have reduced salty, alkaline toxic dust emissions by nearly 100%.

In what is now hailed as an astonishing accidental ecological success story, brine flies soon returned to the thin sheen of water tinged bright green, red and orange by algae and bacteria. Then came tens of thousands of waterfowl and shorebirds that feed on the brine flies.

In 2018, Owens Lake was designated a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site of international importance, joining an exclusive group of 104 areas between Alaska and the southern end of South America certified for their outstanding numbers of birds.

Last week, the repair work of utility crews on the lake bed coincided with the eighth annual Owens Lake Bird Festival, which drew more than 100 nature lovers from across the nation.

The event is co-hosted by many of the conservationists who played a large role in holding L.A. accountable for dust storms that descended on a region of dormant volcanoes, spiky lava fields, craggy mountains and cascading creeks.

On a recent morning, Owens Valley botanist Mike Prather, who helped organize the bird festival, scanned a flooded northern portion of the lake bed through binoculars, smiled and said, "Wow. It's a good day for migrating birds."

"It also looks like the DWP is doing a pretty good job of protecting its investments," he added, "as well as the wildlife here."

Photographs by CAROLYN COLE Los Angeles Times

AS A WEEKLONG heat wave raises the risk of flooding along the Los Angeles Aqueduct, among the infrastructure at stake is $2.5 billion worth of dust control systems the city of L.A. has been required to install at Owens Lake to fight hazardous dust pollution.

State of California, OpenStreetMap contributors

PAUL DUGINSKI Los Angeles Times

OWENS LAKE is a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site of international importance.

CREWS are scrambling to complete repairs and shore up flood defenses amid rising temperatures.

House GOP passes debt ceiling bill paired with cuts

Measure sets up fight with Biden, who says he won't negotiate an extension.

By Lisa Mascaro and Kevin Freking

WASHINGTON — House Republicans narrowly passed sweeping legislation Wednesday that would raise the government's legal debt ceiling by $1.5 trillion in exchange for steep spending restrictions, a tactical victory for Speaker Kevin McCarthy as he challenges President Biden to negotiate and prevent a catastrophic federal default this summer.

Biden has promised to veto the Republican package, though it has almost no chance of passing the Democratic Senate, and the president has so far refused to negotiate over the debt ceiling that the White House insists must be lifted with no strings — as had been customary for years — to ensure America pays its bills.

But McCarthy's ability to swiftly unite his slim majority and bring the measure to passage over opposition from Democrats and holdouts in his own party gives currency to the Republican speaker's threat to use the vote as an opening bid forcing Biden into talks. The two men could hardly be further apart on how to resolve the issue.

The bill passed by a razor-thin 217-215 margin.

"We've done our job," McCarthy (R-Bakersfield) said after the vote.

"The president can no longer ignore" the issue by not not negotiating with House Republicans, he declared.

As the House debated the measure, Biden on Wednesday indicated he was willing to open the door to talks with McCarthy, but not on preventing the nation's first default, which would shake the economy of the U.S. and beyond.

"Happy to meet with McCarthy, but not on whether or not the debt limit gets extended," Biden said. "That's not negotiable."

Passage of the sprawling 320-page package in the House is only the start of what is expected to become a weeks-long political slog as the president and Congress try to work out a compromise that would allow the nation's debt cap, now at $31 trillion, to be lifted to allow further borrowing and stave off a fiscal crisis.

The nation has never defaulted on its debt, and raising the debt ceiling was once a routine matter in the House. But the House Republican majority hopes to maneuver Biden into a corner with its plan to roll back federal spending to fiscal 2022 levels and cap future spending increases at 1% over the next decade, among other changes.

McCarthy worked nonstop to unite his fractious Republican majority, the "five families" — including the right-flank Freedom Caucus and others — making post-midnight changes in the Rules Committee in the push to win over holdouts.

Facing a revolt from Midwestern Republicans over doing away with biofuel tax credits that were just signed into law last year by Biden — a law many of them voted against — GOP House members relented and allowed the tax credits to stay on the books in their bill.

Republicans also agreed to more quickly launch the bolstered work requirements for recipients of government aid, starting in 2024 as proposed by another holdout, Freedom Caucus member Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.), who has led previous challenges to McCarthy.

Republicans hold a five-seat House majority and faced several absences this week, leaving McCarthy with almost no votes to spare. In the end, the speaker lost four Republican votes, and all Democrats opposed the bill.

"This bill is unacceptable, it's unreasonable, it's unworkable, it's unconscionable — and it's un-American," said Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York. "That's why we oppose it."

Democrats derided the GOP plan as a "ransom note," a "shakedown" and "an unserious bill" that was courting financial danger.

But as McCarthy worked to shore up support, some of the most right-leaning rank-and-file Republican members who have never voted for a debt ceiling increase said they were preparing to do just that, rallying behind the speaker's strategy to push Biden to the negotiating table.

It's a first big test for the president and the Republican speaker, coming at a time of increased political anxiety about the ability of Washington to solve big problems amid the need to raise the federal debt limit in a matter of weeks.

The Treasury Department is taking "extraordinary measures" to pay the bills in the meantime, but funding is expected to run out this summer. Economists warn that even the serious threat of a federal debt default would send shock waves through the economy.

In exchange for raising the debt limit by $1.5 trillion into 2024, the bill would roll back overall federal spending and:

Eliminate unspent COVID-19 funds; impose stricter work requirements for recipients of SNAP benefits, formerly known as food stamps, and other government aid; halt Biden's plan to forgive up to $20,000 in student loan debt; and end many of the renewable energy tax breaks Biden signed into law last year. It would tack on a sweeping Republican bill to boost oil, gas and coal production.

In the Senate, leaders were watching and waiting.

Senate Majority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-N.Y.) said that House passage of the legislation would be a "wasted effort" and that McCarthy should come to the table with Democrats to pass a straightforward debt-limit bill without GOP priorities and avoid default.

Mascaro and Freking write for the Associated Press.

Decades of abuse by civilian police worker

[**Abuse,** from A1]
most of whom were underprivileged children looking for guidance and activities and city programs. Court documents show he often preyed on vulnerable boys whose parents were in this country without proper immigration papers. Criminal investigations and civil lawsuits have revealed numerous missed warnings about Uller's abuse over many years.

This week, Santa Monica settled more lawsuits, bringing its total payout to $229.285 million — the most costly single-perpetrator sexual abuse disbursement for any municipality in the state. But more than the money, the case has sparked intense criticism over why the city could not protect its children.

"How could this go on for so long? There is a generational trauma in the community because of Uller," City Councilman Oscar de la Torre said.

"You have to understand in this liberal city, this is a Black and brown part of the city, and no one in the government was watching out for our kids. The Pico neighborhood was marginalized in that era," said De la Torre, noting that Uller's abuse occurred "under the shield of law enforcement" and "not one person lost a job" in response to the oversight.

ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

A POLICE Activities League employee recounted how teenage boys would turn up at the PAL office in Santa Monica's Memorial Park, above, with the latest Air Jordans or other clothing and say Eric Uller bought them.

L.A. County Sheriff's Department

ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

MORE THAN 200 people have come forward to say they were abused by Eric Uller, left, most of whom were underprivileged children. At right, Memorial Park.

Using police ties to lure victims

Uller, a Santa Monica police dispatcher from a wealthy medical family, joined PAL in 1989 as a mentor for troubled youth, records show. The police-sponsored group was launched amid a massive surge in violent crime and the growth of gangs, and the program was an effort to thwart that influence in the impoverished parts of Santa Monica.

He almost immediately began targeting Latino boys ages 12 to 15 from the Pico neighborhood, but some were as young as 8, said attorney Brian Claypool, who has represented more than 80 victims.

Victims said Uller used his police connections to lure them.

"He bribed me with money, baseball cards, Dodger tickets, lunch," said John AM Doe, one of hundreds of former PAL youth who accused Uller of repeated rape and sexual abuse over two years and blamed the city for allowing a predator to stalk children.

John AM Doe was identified in court documents by a pseudonym and is not being identified by The Times, which generally does not name the victims of sexual assault. He said he was 12 when he met Uller, who drove him and other boys around in his Chevy Suburban, which was outfitted with a police radio, or in an unmarked police car given to him by the department. He recalls Uller having a badge and handcuffs and said he even left a gun on the car seat once.

"Everyone thought he was a police officer," John AM Doe said.

John Doe 4 was 11 when the abuse began in 1989, court records show. The boy was first molested when Uller took him to his father's medical office under the pretext of getting a physical exam needed to play sports, a ploy Uller used repeatedly, authorities said. The abuse continued for two years, according to court documents.

Suspicions raised: 'It seemed odd'

A Santa Monica police sergeant became suspicious of Uller's behavior with a boy between 1991 and 1993 and launched an investigation, according to a 2018 Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department report reviewed by The Times.

Michelle Cardiel, a PAL employee from 1990 to 1998, told a sheriff's detective that "the child went everywhere with Eric, and it seemed odd."

Cardiel told sheriff's investigators that around 1995, a boy told her that Uller had offered to help "clean his penis because his father is a doctor." Cardiel reported the incident to Santa Monica Police Officer Jay Trisler, who was then assigned to the PAL program, and Trisler said he would investigate. She also told her PAL boss, Patty Loggins, who told Cardiel that she would be written up if she kept spreading workplace gossip, according to the sheriff's report.

The following day, Cardiel said, Uller approached her and said the interaction he'd had with the boy had been inappropriate and begged her not to mention it again.

Neither Trisler nor Loggins returned messages for comment.

In an interview with The Times, Cardiel recalled two officers who interviewed the boy at the time saying "there had been a misunderstanding," and Uller never touched the child.

No action was taken against Uller.

In a sworn declaration obtained by The Times, a female detective with the sheriff's juvenile unit whose identity is being withheld from this report said she became suspicious of Uller, noting he "was becoming too close, both physically and emotionally, with the boys that I saw him with."

"I thought that Eric's behavior and involvement around the boys was not appropriate, and so I reported my concerns to my sergeant and my lieutenant," the detective said, noting that she was told by her superiors it was not her business.

She said she also discovered that Uller had had boys over at his house and had taken them on weekend trips. When she told him to stop this behavior, he ignored her, she said in the declaration.

"When I think about how he molested these boys while I was a Santa Monica police officer whose job it was to protect kids from people like Eric, it breaks my heart," she wrote.

Cardiel also recounted how teenage boys would turn up at the PAL office in Memorial Park with the latest Air Jordans or other clothing and say Uller bought them.

"Uller befriended all the officers and managers and dazzled them with his computer skills," Cardiel said.

After starting as a 911 dispatcher, Uller rose to become the principal systems analyst for the city's information technology department, and in 2009 he was awarded the Santa Monica Rotary Club's public service award. He spent most of his career overhauling the 911 system, overseeing the city's surveillance cameras, rebuilding the arrest and traffic violation databases and constructing a crime-mapping system.

According to the sheriff's report from 2018, several former Santa Monica city employees told detectives they reported Uller's misconduct.

Retired Santa Monica Police Lt. Greg Slaughter, who headed the department's communications center where Uller was the lead systems analyst, said that one morning in the early 2000s, a supervisor turned on a computer for work and child pornography popped up on the screen. Slaughter said he immediately ordered an investigation, which led to Uller, but he was never interviewed regarding the allegations.

Slaughter told a sheriff's investigator that Uller reported directly to the chief of police, James Butts.

"The rank structure was overlooked for Eric's behalf," Slaughter said in the sheriff's report.

Slaughter also said he witnessed Uller driving young boys "all over town" and reported it to his bosses. He said that after learning that Uller "was given a take-home, fully equipped unmarked police vehicle," he told the department's chief of staff that such use was improper.

Butts, who led the Santa Monica Police Department from 1991 to 2006 and is now mayor of Inglewood, said Tuesday in an email to The Times that he "was never made aware of any allegations against Uller or anyone in the program."

$20 bills and trips to Lakers games

Some of Uller's victims recalled he would even turn on the police lights and siren as he drove them home, further enforcing the idea that he was a cop working under the color of authority, documents summarizing the victims' accounts reveal.

Uller bribed some with $20 bills, trips to Lakers games or McDonald's and video games, according to witness statements. Others he threatened, particularly those who'd had scrapes with the law or whose families' immigration status made them vulnerable.

"I couldn't say nothing because my family would go to jail," said John AM Doe, who said he was abused by Uller for two years. "It was as if he could get away with whatever he wanted."

Another victim alleged that Uller began abusing him as a teenager after he was arrested by Santa Monica police. As the young man struggled with other run-ins with the law, he was forced to submit to sex acts with Uller, according to his court claim records.

"The unspoken threat is if I didn't go along with Eric, I would go to jail," the man said in a recent court declaration.

Initially, Uller took boys to dark alleyways not far from their homes, investigators said. He would drive them in an unmarked police car or his Suburban or a Toyota 4Runner, both of which had dark-tinted windows. He also used a pitch-black side street next to Woodlawn Cemetery as a stopping point. As he became more brazen, he began using the PAL van and the nonprofit's office for his abuse, court records show.

By the mid-1990s, Uller was abusing a boy identified as John Doe 6, who was 13 or 14. Uller told the victim he could get him a job, but the teen would first need to get a "physical exam." Uller then took him to his father's office after-hours and molested him, the lawsuit states. The abuse continued for four years.

A suicide and secrets revealed

Uller's public facade as a friendly authority figure helping troubled kids began to unravel in 2018, when he was arrested on suspicion of molesting four boys while he was a PAL volunteer during the early 1990s, according to Sheriff's Department records.

Uller, 50, was charged with multiple counts of lewd acts on a child. After his arrest, six additional people came forward to accuse the longtime city employee of sexual abuse.

But on the day he was scheduled to appear in court, Uller was found dead by suicide in his Marina del Rey apartment.

In the wake of Uller's death, the Santa Monica Police Department announced it was referring to the Sheriff's Department an allegation that individuals who knew of Uller's abuses had failed to raise any alarms as required by the Child Abuse Neglect and Reporting Act. But no one was ever charged.

And Uller's personnel file had no documentation of any "complaints, allegations or investigations regarding sexual abuse" or misconduct involving PAL, according to the sheriff's report.

On the contrary, in May 1999, Uller was heralded by Santa Monica police as civilian employee of the year and received a standing ovation. "There appears to be no one in the department that Uller has not helped with his ability to repair computers, program radios and volunteer for a host of events," a citation noted.

Claypool, a lawyer representing John AM Doe and dozens of other plaintiffs, said he's never seen a sexual abuse case like this.

"We have a city tech guy playing a cop in front of real cops, giving kids rides at night alone, going on trips," Claypool said.

"The Police Department and the city had repeated warnings. Staff and kids complained to Santa Monica police officers, saying he was doing these horrendous things."

'So much pain and heartbreak'

In response to numerous questions from The Times, the city called Uller's abuse "heartbreaking and disturbing" and said that since learning of the allegations in 2018, it has taken actions to ensure the safety of youth across all city programs.

Officials also hired a consulting firm experienced in sexual abuse investigations and approved a Child Protection Resolution to help detect inappropriate behaviors and prevent abuse.

Mayor Gleam Davis said Santa Monica has "modified virtually every program in this community that addresses youth," noting the abuse occurred two to three decades ago and none of the current city leadership or PAL staff were there at the time.

"I want to make sure everyone understands that this was a sad chapter of the city's history, and we hope and pray that this will never happen again," Davis said Tuesday after the vote to approve the settlement. "Our hearts go out to the victims who experienced so much pain and heartbreak."

But the measures and the settlement can't make up for all the young lives that Uller shattered, John AM Doe said.

"I dropped out of school. I had kids that I didn't pay attention to. I went to jail for making bad choices," said John AM Doe, who spent three years in prison. "I see his name every f—ing day and night in my mind.

"There is no dollar amount that will fix what I go through," he said.

Montana GOP bars trans lawmaker for rest of session

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HELENA, Mont. — Montana Republicans barred transgender Rep. Zooey Zephyr from the House floor on Wednesday, wielding decorum rules after she rebuked colleagues for supporting a ban on gender-affirming care for children and then protested efforts to silence her.

The action against the freshman lawmaker caps a weeklong standoff between Montana House Democrats and Republicans over Zephyr's telling colleagues last week that they would "see the blood on [their] hands" over their votes to ban such treatment.

Zephyr will still be able to vote remotely.

In a speech Wednesday before colleagues voted to bar her from the floor, Zephyr addressed House Speaker Matt Regier and said she was taking a stand for the LGBTQ+ community, her constituents in Missoula and "democracy itself."

She accused Regier of taking away the voices of her 11,000 constituents and attempting to drive "a nail in the coffin of democracy" by silencing her.

"If you use decorum to silence people who hold you accountable, then all you're doing is using decorum as a tool of oppression," she said.

Regier had previously said he wouldn't allow Zephyr to speak until she apologized for her previous comments. She refused.

For the last week, Zephyr has been forbidden from speaking on the House floor.

THOM BRIDGE Independent Record

REP. ZEPHYR'S discipline follows remarks she made that Republicans say violated decorum.

A protest against her silencing disrupted Monday's House session. Authorities arrested seven people in a confrontation that Republicans claim she encouraged.

The first-term Democrat received notice from House leaders Tuesday night of the plan to consider disciplinary action against her, according to a letter she posted on social media.

"I've also been told I'll get a chance to speak," Zephyr tweeted. "I will do as I have always done — rise on behalf of my constituents, in defense of my community and for democracy itself."

Since her remarks last week, conservative Republicans have repeatedly misgendered Zephyr with incorrect pronouns.

"Republicans are doubling down on their agenda of running roughshod over Montanans' rights — to free expression, to peaceful protest, to equal justice under the law," House Minority Leader Kim Abbott (D-Helena) said of the plan to discipline Zephyr.

Zephyr's remarks last week and the Republican response led to a rally outside the Capitol on Monday. Protesters then packed the House gallery and chanted, "Let her speak," bringing proceedings to a halt.

"Currently, all representatives are free to participate in House debates while following the House rules," Regier told reporters Tuesday, adding: "The only person silencing Rep. Zephyr is Rep. Zephyr. The Montana House will not be bullied."

He and other Republicans say her remark was far outside the boundaries of appropriate civil discourse.

The events have showcased the growing power of the Montana Freedom Caucus, a group of right-wing lawmakers that has spearheaded the charge to discipline Zephyr. The caucus said in a statement that Zephyr had hoisted a microphone toward the gallery's protesters, thus "encouraging an insurrection."

Although several protesters resisted law enforcement officers trying to arrest them on Monday, Abbott pushed back at characterizing the activity as violent.

"It was chanting, but it absolutely was not violent," she said. "Sometimes extreme measures have a response like this."

Zephyr said in an earlier speech that the GOP's reaction illustrated how her remarks had struck a chord with those in power.

She has argued that her "blood on your hands" remark accurately reflected the stakes of such bans for transgender kids.

BUSINESS

SpaceX launched concrete chucks far away

Federal officials find 385 acres of debris and are assessing effects of the massive blastoff on wildlife in Texas.

By Samantha Masunaga

Patrick T. Fallon AFP/Getty Images

SPACEX'S Starship rocket lifts off from Boca Chica, Texas, in a test flight last week. The launch tossed concrete chunks, stainless-steel sheets and other objects thousands of feet. Minutes later, the spacecraft exploded.

SpaceX's explosive test flight of its Starship rocket last week hurled "pulverized concrete" up to 6½ miles northwest of the South Texas launchpad and resulted in about 385 acres of debris on SpaceX's facility and at nearby Boca Chica State Park, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The agency said many large concrete chunks, stainless-steel sheets, metal and other objects were "hurled thousands of feet away," along with a plume of concrete particles that resulted in the miles-away scattering. A 3½-acre fire also started on Boca Chica State Park, south of the launchpad, the agency said.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was assessing the effects of the launch because SpaceX's launch site is near the agency's Lower Rio Grande Valley National Wildlife Refuge and Boca Chica State Park, which is leased by Fish and Wildlife and managed as part of the Lower Rio Grande Valley refuge.

Agency staff were not allowed to go onto refuge-owned or managed lands until two days after the launch because of "launch pad safety concerns." Fish and Wildlife said it hadn't found any dead birds or wildlife on any of those lands.

SpaceX did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the agency's assessment.

Fish and Wildlife said it was in communication with SpaceX and other agencies to "provide on-the-ground guidance to minimize further impacts and reduce long-term damages to natural resources." The agency is also coordinating with the Federal Aviation Administration on its assessment of the site, recommendations and whether SpaceX is complying with the Endangered Species Act.

The FAA is leading a separate mishap investigation of the test launch, which ended with the rocket exploding minutes into the mission, and said last week that it would not allow Starship to fly again until it determined that any system or procedure related to the mishap did not affect public safety.

On Wednesday, the FAA said the launch debris spread means SpaceX will be required to have "ongoing monitoring of vegetation and wildlife by a qualified biologist," including a pre- and post-launch survey, and sending a report to the FAA and other state or federal agencies. SpaceX must also work with local and federal authorities to remove launch debris from "sensitive habitats."

The FAA said it will ensure the company complies with all these requirements.

Last week's Starship launch was the first time SpaceX had launched its massive rocket, which has 33 engines in its Super Heavy first-stage booster. The rocket cleared the launch tower and soared into the sky for a few minutes before somersaulting and exploding in midair.

The Hawthorne space company later said the explosion was triggered by the rocket's autonomous flight termination system, a safety measure embedded in the rocket's software that destroys the launch vehicle if it senses that its course or performance is awry or unsafe. SpaceX said multiple rocket engines were out during the flight and that Starship lost altitude.

Despite the explosive ending, the company called the test flight a "win" because its publicly stated goal was to lift off and clear the launchpad. SpaceX develops its rockets through an iterative process and tests often to improve design and engineering. Company representatives said on last week's launch webcast that there are already several new Starship rockets in the testing queue.

SpaceX's Texas launch site does not have a cavernous flame trench, intended to divert energy away from a rocket's base, typical of more established, government-run launchpads at Cape Canaveral in Florida or Vandenberg Space Force Base near Lompoc, Calif. Launch watchers noticed last week that the SpaceX pad sustained what seemed to be substantial damage after liftoff.

Fish and Wildlife had previously been concerned how long SpaceX had been closing public roads in Boca Chica for testing, alleging that the company had exceeded its assigned hours, according to "60 Minutes." An agency employee said in a letter to SpaceX obtained by "60 Minutes" that SpaceX workers were parking on refuge lands.

In addition to the debris documented by Fish and Wildlife, local residents reported broken windows and shaking homes in nearby Port Isabel, Texas, after the launch. Cars equipped to livestream the launch that were parked close to the launch site got pummeled by the force of the launch, and one was hit by bowling-ball-size concrete chunks.

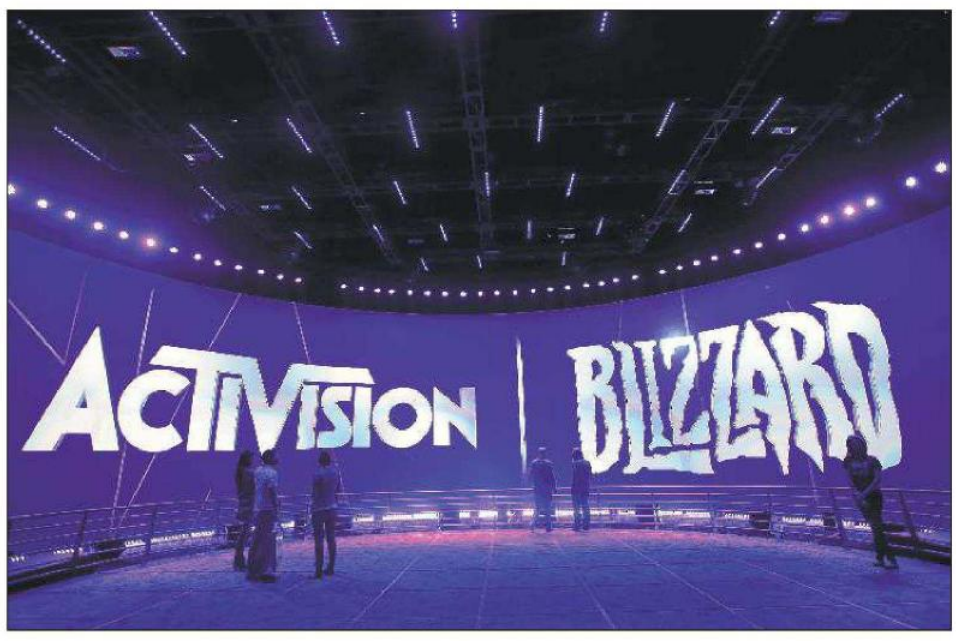
There were also reports of black particulate matter and dust, including one case in which a car was dusted with black sand-like particles, Dave Cortez, director of the Sierra Club Lone Star chapter, said last week. The group has campaigned with other local organizations to amplify residents' concerns about the effects of SpaceX launches on the community.

The effects of the launch were surprising, even for Eric Roesch, an environmental compliance specialist who has followed SpaceX's South Texas site development for nearly two years and raised concerns in his ESG Hound Substack about the potential effects of launching such a large rocket on a concrete slab.

"The specific manner of the debris field that was created, it certainly was above what even I imagined," he said. "It's illustrative of the whole process being inadequate for disclosing risks. And disclosing risks is the important part of this process."

Britain thwarts Microsoft purchase

By Kelvin Chan



Jae C. Hong Associated Press

MICROSOFT reached an all-cash $69-billion deal to buy video game maker Activision Blizzard, but competition concerns led British regulators to block it.

LONDON — British regulators Wednesday blocked Microsoft's $69-billion deal to buy video game maker Activision Blizzard, thwarting the biggest tech deal in history over worries that it would stifle competition for popular titles such as "Call of Duty" in the fast-growing cloud gaming market.

The United Kingdom's Competition and Markets Authority said in its final report that "the only effective remedy" to the substantial loss of competition "is to prohibit the merger." The companies have vowed to appeal.

The all-cash deal announced 15 months ago has faced stiff opposition from rival Sony, which makes the PlayStation gaming system, and also was being scrutinized by regulators in the U.S. and Europe over fears that it would give Microsoft and its Xbox console control of hit franchises such as "Call of Duty" and "World of Warcraft."

The U.K. watchdog's decision "came as a surprise to most people" and heightens global uncertainty over the deal, said Liam Deane, a game industry analyst for research firm Omdia.

"It's a big enough market to throw a pretty serious spanner in the works from Microsoft and Activision's perspective, but things will get a lot worse if they also get the wrong decision from the European Commission in a few weeks' time," he said.

The British watchdog agency's concerns centered on how the deal would affect cloud gaming, which streams to tablets, phones and other devices and frees players from the need to buy expensive consoles and gaming computers. Gamers can keep playing major Activision titles, including mobile games such as "Candy Crush," on whichever platforms they typically use.

Cloud gaming has the potential to change the industry by giving people more choice over how and where they play, said Martin Colman, chair of the Competition and Markets Authority's independent expert panel investigating the deal.

"This means that it is vital that we protect competition in this emerging and exciting market," he said.

The decision underscores Europe's reputation as the global leader in efforts to rein in the power of Big Tech companies. A day earlier, the British government unveiled draft legislation that would give regulators more power to protect consumers from online scams and fake reviews and boost digital competition.

The decision further dims Microsoft's hopes that a favorable outcome could help it resolve a lawsuit brought by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission. A trial before the FTC's in-house judge is set to begin Aug. 2. The European Union's decision, meanwhile, is due May 22.

Activision lashed out, portraying the watchdog's decision as a bad signal to international investors in Britain at a time when its economy faces severe challenges.

The California-based game maker said it would "work aggressively" with Microsoft to appeal, asserting that the move "contradicts the ambitions of the U.K." to be an attractive place for tech companies.

"We will reassess our growth plans for the U.K. Global innovators large and small will take note that — despite all its rhetoric — the U.K. is clearly closed for business," Activision said.

Redmond, Wash.-based Microsoft also signaled that it wasn't ready to give up.

"We remain fully committed to this acquisition and will appeal," President Brad Smith said in a statement. He said the British antitrust watchdog's decision "rejects a pragmatic path to address competition concerns" and discourages tech innovation and investment in the U.K.

"We're especially disappointed that after lengthy deliberations, this decision appears to reflect a flawed understanding of this market and the way the relevant cloud technology actually works," Smith said.

Activision Chief Executive Bobby Kotick said in a blog post that both companies have begun working on an appeal to the U.K.'s Competition Appeal Tribunal.

It's not the first time that British regulators have flexed their antitrust muscles on a Big Tech deal. They previously blocked Facebook parent Meta's purchase of Giphy over fears that it would limit innovation and competition. The social media giant appealed the decision to a tribunal but lost and was forced to sell the GIF-sharing platform.

Microsoft already has a strong position in the cloud computing market, and regulators concluded that if the Activision deal went through, it would reinforce the company's advantage by giving it control of key game titles.

In an attempt to ease concerns, Microsoft struck deals with Nintendo and some cloud gaming providers to license Activision titles such as "Call of Duty" for 10 years and offered the same to Sony.

Sony's European press office did not respond to a request for comment.

The British watchdog said it reviewed Microsoft's remedies "in considerable depth" but found they would require its oversight, whereas preventing the merger would allow cloud gaming to develop without intervention.

Cloud gaming is a small piece of Britain's $6.2-billion video game market. But an expert forecast suggests that it will see explosive growth in the coming years, with user numbers tripling from the start of 2021 to the end of 2022 and the cloud game market expected to grow to a value of $1.25 billion by 2026, regulators said.

They had dropped concerns last month that the deal would hurt console gaming, saying it wouldn't benefit Microsoft to make "Call of Duty" exclusive to its Xbox console.

Chan writes for the Associated Press.

MARKET ROUNDUP

Stocks end mixed as First Republic falls

Associated Press

Wall Street fell again Wednesday, though a rally for Microsoft and other Big Tech stocks helped to limit the losses.

The Standard & Poor's 500 dropped 15.64 points, or 0.4%, to 4,055.99. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 228.96 points, or 0.7%, to 33,301.87, while the Nasdaq composite led the market with a gain of 55.19 points, or 0.5%, to 11,854.35.

Wall Street was coming off its worst day in a month, hurt by concerns about the strength of U.S. banks. The spotlight has been harshest on First Republic Bank, which lost an additional 29.8% after nearly halving the day before. That's when it gave details about how many customers bolted amid last month's turmoil in the industry.

The worry is that it and other smaller and midsize banks could suffer debilitating runs of deposits from customers, similar to the ones that caused last month's failures of Silicon Valley Bank and Signature Bank. Even without more shutdowns, the industry's struggles could cause a pullback in lending by banks that saps the economy.

PacWest Bancorp, another bank that's been in investors' spotlight, rose 7.5% after beating forecasts and saying that its deposits have grown since late March. That may boost hopes that First Republic's struggles could be isolated, rather than a symptom of deeper issues with the system.

Also dropping sharply Wednesday was Enphase Energy, which fell 25.7% despite reporting stronger profit and revenue for the latest quarter than forecast. Analysts pointed to its revenue forecast for the current quarter, which fell short of some expectations.

Activision Blizzard, meanwhile, tumbled 11.4% after British regulators blocked its takeover by Microsoft on concerns it would hurt competition in the cloud gaming market.

Although the majority of stocks fell, gains for Microsoft and other Big Tech companies prevented a sharper slide for the market.

Microsoft rose 7.2% after reporting stronger profit for the first three months of the year than analysts expected.

Tech stocks have broadly been some of the year's best performers as tech companies have laid off workers and made other cost cuts to improve profitability. Hopes for a coming pause from the Federal Reserve on its barrage of interest rate increases have also helped them in particular.

Google's parent company, Alphabet, also turned a bigger profit than expected. But its stock slipped 0.2%.

Chipotle Mexican Grill rose 12.9%, the biggest gain in the S&P 500, after reporting stronger profit than expected.

Stocks have been mostly listless in recent weeks, as Wall Street struggles with several questions. With few answers imminent, Mark Haefele, UBS Global Wealth Management's chief investment officer, expects stocks to stay stuck in a range.

Major stock indexes

Index	Close	Daily change	Daily % change	YTD % change
Dow industrials	33,301.87	-228.96	-0.68	+0.47
S&P 500	4,055.99	-15.64	-0.38	+5.64
Nasdaq composite	11,854.35	+55.19	+0.47	+13.26
S&P 400	2,430.17	-21.14	-0.86	-0.01
Russell 2000	1,730.41	-15.54	-0.89	-1.75
EuroStoxx 50	4,344.61	-33.24	-0.76	+14.56
Nikkei (Japan)	28,416.47	-203.60	-0.71	+8.90
Hang Seng (Hong Kong)	19,757.27	+139.39	+0.71	-0.12

Associated Press

Disney sues DeSantis over theme parks' control

[**Disney,** from A1]
when Florida officials were thrilled to let Disney turn miles of swampland into a bustling hub.

DeSantis signed legislation in late February that allowed the state to take over the Disney-controlled Reedy Creek Improvement District and replace it with a tourism oversight board. He handpicked members for the new board — filling it with cultural conservatives and political allies — only to learn that the outgoing Reedy Creek supervisors had preemptively undercut the state's power.

Reedy Creek officials in January adopted a new development deal giving Disney authority over its land use until at least 21 years after the death of the last surviving descendant of Britain's King Charles III.

DeSantis and his allies were stunned and quickly moved to reverse those changes.

Disney's lawsuit sidesteps issues of land use and instead raises 1st Amendment concerns. The complaint, which seeks declaratory relief and an injunction, alleges that DeSantis has been waging a "relentless campaign to weaponize government power against Disney in retaliation for expressing a political viewpoint."

Will Creeley, legal director for the nonpartisan Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, said "the escalation of this dispute signals a troubling willingness by the governor to punish those who disagree with him."

"This is the United States; the government is not supposed to abuse its power to punish dissenters or critics," he said.

The lawsuit was filed in Tallahassee just minutes after the DeSantis-appointed oversight board voted to invalidate changes that the Disney-aligned Reedy Creek supervisors made in January. The company is seeking to preserve its ability to control the 43-square-mile region that includes Disney's central Florida hotels and theme parks, including Magic Kingdom and Epcot.

JOE RAEDLE Getty Images

WALT DISNEY CO. is seeking to preserve its ability to control the 43-square-mile region that includes Disney's central Florida hotels and theme parks, including Magic Kingdom, above, and Epcot.

> 'The escalation of this dispute signals a troubling willingness by the governor to punish those who disagree with him.'
>
> — WILL CREELEY, legal director for the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression

DeSantis' office slammed the action.

"We are unaware of any legal right that a company has to operate its own government or maintain special privileges not held by other businesses in the state," the governor's spokesperson, Taryn Fenske, said in a statement Wednesday. "This lawsuit is yet another unfortunate example of their hope to undermine the will of the Florida voters and operate outside the bounds of the law."

Disney's 74-page complaint echoed Chief Executive Bob Iger's view that DeSantis' efforts were retaliation for Disney exercising its free speech rights.

After Disney's then-CEO Bob Chapek called DeSantis on March 9, 2022, to express the company's concerns about the then-pending legislation, DeSantis reportedly told Chapek: "'You shouldn't get involved[;] it's not going to work out well for you,'" the lawsuit said.

The following day, DeSantis' reelection campaign staff sent an email accusing "Woke Disney" of "echoing Democrat propaganda."

DeSantis announced the entertainment company had "crossed the line," according to the lawsuit.

"We're going to make sure we're fighting back when people are threatening our parents and threatening our kids," DeSantis said during a March 2022 news conference.

In another example Disney described as problematic: The Florida House member who introduced the Reedy Creek dissolution bill last year told his colleagues during a hearing: "You kick the hornet's nest, things come up. ... This bill does target one company. It targets the Walt Disney Company."

Disney also listed the benefits it has provided the Sunshine State during the last 50 years, including "establishing central Florida as a top global tourist destination and attracting tens of millions of visitors to the state each year."

Disney noted that it was one of the region's largest taxpayers — contributing more than $1.1 billion in state and local taxes last year — and among Florida's biggest employers, with more than 75,000 employees.

Since the late 1960s, the Reedy Creek district has built 134 miles of roadways and 67 miles of waterways. And Disney said it plans to invest an additional $17 billion in Walt Disney World over the next decade, producing an estimated 13,000 new jobs.

Efforts during the last year to defuse the situation have gone nowhere, said Disney, which is represented by Los Angeles lawyer Daniel M. Petrocelli.

"The governor and his allies have made clear they do not care and will not stop," the lawsuit states.

"The governor recently declared that his team would not only 'void the development agreement' — just as they did today — but also planned 'to look at things like taxes on the hotels,' 'tolls on the roads,' 'developing some of the property that the district owns' with 'more amusement parks,' and even putting a 'state prison' next to Walt Disney World," the lawsuit said.

Disney is asking the judge to strike down the Florida legislation that took its land-use powers away.

Harvard constitutional law professor Laurence Tribe accused DeSantis of "doubly violating" the 1st Amendment, first with the Don't Say Gay legislation, and then again by threatening retaliation against Disney for opposing that bill.

The latter, Tribe said, "violates both the free speech clause and the freedom of petition clause of the 1st Amendment."

The U.S. Supreme Court's landmark 2010 Citizens United decision gave corporations and other outside groups the same 1st Amendment rights as people, allowing them to make unlimited campaign donations.

"Conservatives like it when a decision like Citizens United protects the free speech rights of corporations that try to influence our politics in a right-wing direction," Tribe said, referencing the controversial ruling. "They can't suddenly pretend that corporations don't have free speech rights when they don't like what the corporations are saying."

And as for the possibility that DeSantis will argue that the steps he's taken to push back on Disney are unrelated to the company's speech? "We can expect him to try," Tribe said, "just like we can expect Mickey Mouse to fly."

Creeley, the legal director, said the issue goes beyond a Republican governor taking on a corporate behemoth from a blue state.

He pointed to the U.S. Supreme Court's interest in a National Rifle Assn. case, which argues that New York's former Democratic governor and state finance official sought to punish companies, including insurance providers, that did business with the NRA.

"You can't allow government officials — whether they are in blue states, red states or purple states, to say: 'We're gonna lean on this company or these critics because we don't like their political views,'" Creeley said. "That should trouble every American no matter what their political beliefs."

Times staff writer Ryan Faughnder contributed to this report.

The mouse roars back against bumbling bully

[**Hiltzik,** from A1]
The outlines of the Disney-DeSantis fight have been well chewed over at this point. It's the personal swipes buried within the company's legal filing that entertain and amuse. More on those in a moment.

First, let's recap. At issue is Walt Disney Co.'s public criticism of Florida's Parental Rights in Education law, which was signed by DeSantis in March 2022.

The law, dubbed "Don't Say Gay" by its critics, suppresses, even outlaws, discussions about "sexual orientation or gender identity" in Florida schools through third grade and places limits on those discussions in upper grades.

The law was part of DeSantis' campaign to eradicate what he called "woke" ideology from Florida, a stance plainly designed to appeal to a conservative voting bloc as he prepared to seek the GOP nomination for president.

Under its former chief executive, Bob Chapek, Disney at first remained silent about the measure, despite its reputation for accommodating LGBTQ+ people among its employees and park visitors. Chapek finally bowed to pressure from Disney workers and others and came out against the law.

DeSantis promptly struck back. He moved to revoke Disney's near-dictatorial control over the 43-square-mile site of Walt Disney World and its related theme parks and resorts outside Orlando.

Through the Reedy Creek Improvement District, governed by Disney and created in a deal between the company and Florida's then-Republican governor, Claude Kirk, in 1967, Disney has kept the site in manicured comeliness for more than a half-century.

DeSantis' efforts to take control of the district ran into a roadblock, however. Days before he signed a law turning the district over to a handpicked board of political stooges, Disney signed long-term development contracts with the district's preexisting board (comprising handpicked Disney stooges) that preserved the company's development rights for decades to come.

Advantage, Disney.

DeSantis hasn't ceased bellyaching about being outmaneuvered by Disney's lawyers. He has claimed that the development contracts aren't legal and threatened to take actions in the district that Disney won't like.

At one point, he even raised the prospect of building a state prison on unused land within the tract, which would obviously do wonders for preserving the allure of Florida's No. 1 tourist attraction.

On Wednesday, DeSantis' board voted to declare the development contracts "void and unenforceable." Disney knew this was coming and filed the lawsuit immediately.

Now let's examine Disney's case, as laid out in its lawsuit.

First, the company claims credit for turning central Florida from a godforsaken wasteland into a thriving economic engine for the entire state. It's hard to argue with that.

"The State of Florida has flourished in the years since Walt Disney himself surveyed many acres of swampland in 1963 and dreamed of the possibility of Walt Disney World," the lawsuit says. (You have to love that crack about "swampland.")

The filing notes that Disney employs more than 75,000 Floridians at its parks complex and is "one of Central Florida's largest taxpayers, with more than $1.1 billion paid in state and local taxes last year."

Disney warns that DeSantis tampers with that engine at his peril. The company says it plans to invest more than $17 billion in Walt Disney World over the next decade, producing 13,000 new jobs.

In its lawsuit, Disney also documents how DeSantis and his Republican sycophants in the state Legislature have been leading with their collective chin by stating overtly that they're aiming to punish Disney for speaking its corporate mind.

"They have proudly declared that Disney deserves this fate because of what Disney said," the lawsuit states, producing "as clear a case of retaliation as this Court is ever likely to see."

It's hard to believe the Republicans could be that stupid, but there you have it. The company quotes one of the sponsors of the Reedy Creek dissolution bill as saying, "This bill does target one company. It targets the Walt Disney Company."

The lawsuit also documents the increasingly febrile and fatuous claims by DeSantis about Disney's ideology.

"Disney ... clearly crossed a line in its support of indoctrinating very young schoolchildren in woke gender identity politics," DeSantis wrote in his recently published memoir, "The Courage to Be Free."

In the same book, DeSantis called Disney's outspokenness about the "Don't Say Gay" law "a textbook example of when a corporation should stay out of politics." In the same book, by the way, DeSantis writes that Disney "has a massive presence in Florida but is headquartered in the leftist enclave of Burbank, California."

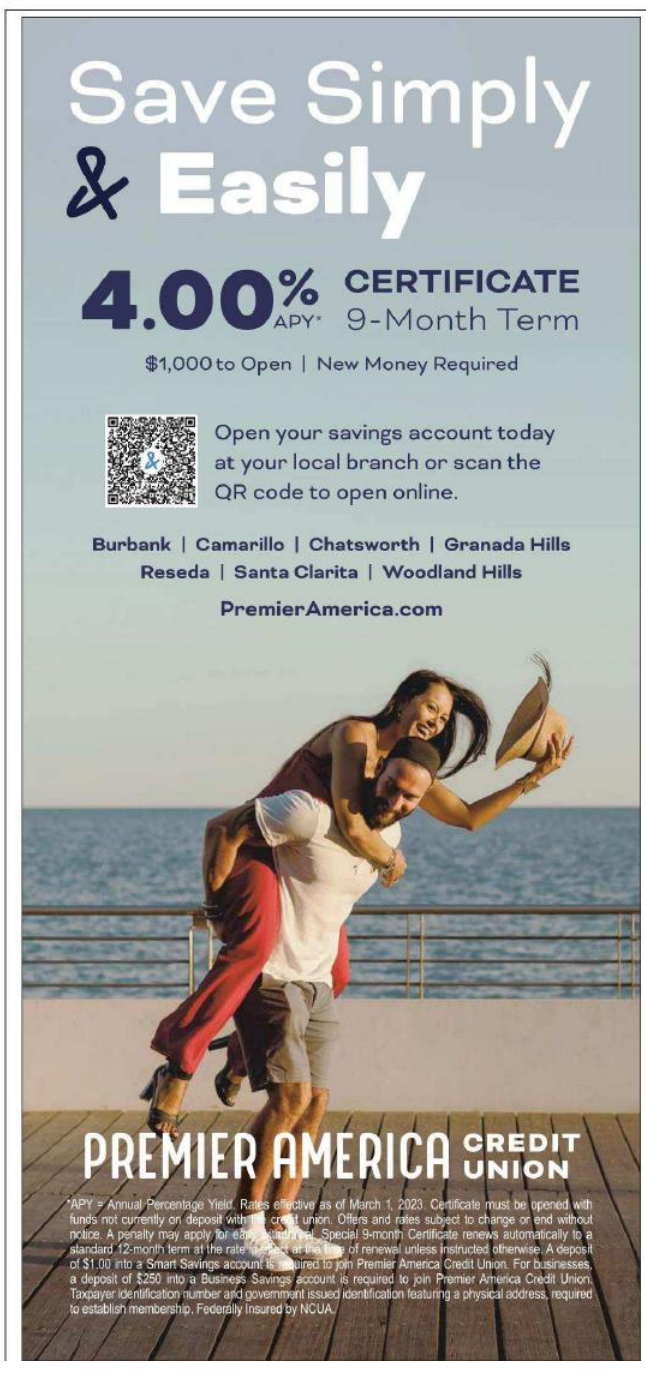
Question: Has DeSantis ever been to Burbank, California? Maybe he's confusing it with Berkeley, California.

One almost sympathizes with DeSantis. His presidential aspirations are up in the air. That's partially because he has turned out to be a risibly maladroit politician whenever he has ventured outside the confines of his hothouse of a state, and partially because he's got all the charisma of a linoleum floor. That's not good when you're trying to supplant Donald Trump, who can attract wall-to-wall media coverage while taking a midafternoon siesta.

DeSantis' anti-Disney campaign appears to be showing its seams. Republicans outside Florida are skeptical about taking on a corporation that is far more popular among ordinary Americans than he is, and appears to have much better lawyers too.

In the meantime, the rest of us can sit back and enjoy the show, and we don't have to pay $10.99 a month for Disney+ to stream it on TV, either.

Hiltzik writes a blog on latimes.com. Follow him on Facebook or on Twitter @hiltzikm or email michael.hiltzik@latimes.com.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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

Rebecca Wanders

SMITHGROUP

ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN

Rebecca Wanders, SmithGroup

Rebecca Wanders has joined SmithGroup's business development team. With 12 years of interior design and project management experience, Rebecca connects clients needing design solutions with the firm's Workplace and Science & Technology experts. In her new business development director role, she works to expand the firm's impact in Southern California.

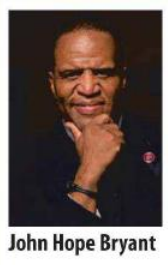
Kristy Scanlan

Saffron!c

ENTERTAINMENT

Kristy Scanlan, Saffronic

Saffronic hires Kristy Scanlan as new SVP, Business Development. Previously, Kristy was SVP, Business Development for Mainframe Studios, as well as VP of Business Development, Animation & Games, at Technicolor for 10+ years. At Threshold Entertainment, she oversaw development and production of long-form animated content.



John Hope Bryant

OPERATION HOPE

NON-PROFIT

John Hope Bryant, Operation HOPE

John Hope Bryant is the founder, chairman & CEO of Operation HOPE, Inc., the nation's largest nonprofit dedicated to financial literacy. In 1992, Bryant founded HOPE to help spur economic development following the LA uprisings. To date, the organization has infused more than $4B in capital to underserved communities. operationhope.org.

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OPINION

EDITORIALS

JAY L. CLENDENIN Los Angeles Times

OVERHEAD ELECTRIC power lines in Redondo Beach.

Don't let power companies get their way on our electric bills

California is moving to an income-based formula for electric rates. Regulators should proceed cautiously.

What Californians pay on their electric bills is based almost entirely on how much power they consume, with maintenance, grid operation and other expenses built into the rates.

That's a problem, not only because rates in California continue to climb even while state climate policies push people to switch to electric vehicles and appliances. But because energy use does not vary as much by income as you might think, it means that low-income customers end up spending more of their paychecks supporting the utilities' infrastructure than wealthy users.

That's soon going to change. Under Assembly Bill 205, a sweeping energy bill the California lawmakers passed last year, the state Public Utilities Commission is required to adopt fixed monthly charges based on household income for the three big investor-owned utilities to help pay for delivery costs including poles, wires, energy efficiency subsidies and wildfire mitigation, while lowering consumption-based rates.

California is breaking new ground with this progressive approach. Using income-based brackets means higher earners would pay more and low-income Californians would not shoulder too much of the burden from home and vehicle electrification. But state regulators shouldn't go as far as the three big utilities — Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric and Pacific Gas & Electric — have proposed. Instead, the state should ease customers into what will be a radical change in how residential customers pay for power.

Earlier this month the utilities, consumer advocates, environmental groups and others each submitted proposals for how the new fixed-charge system should be designed. The utilities want higher fixed charges to cover more of their infrastructure and administrative costs. Southern California Edison's proposal, for example, has low-income customers paying between $15 and $20 a month on top of their usage. The monthly charge for middle-income customers would be $51, and $85 for customers in the top 19% of earners. The rates for the amount of electricity used would decrease by about 33%.

Consumer and environmental groups proposed a variety of more reasonable alternatives with lower fixed charges.

The investor-owned utilities' use of fixed charges had been capped out of a well-founded concern that assessing an across-the-board fee would discriminate against low-income customers who use less electricity. Climate change necessitated a move from focusing solely on energy conservation to shifting from fossil fuels to electricity generated from wind, solar and other clean, renewable sources. The utilities have pushed to recover more of their costs through fixed charges, and would benefit from the certainty of knowing what they will collect, no matter how much their customers consume. Consumer advocates came to support the idea as long as the charges were graduated by income.

There are many details yet to be worked out by the PUC before final approval is expected in 2024. One of the most important will be coming up with a realistic and secure way to verify household income without giving utilities access to customers' financial information. Whether that's through a state agency using tax data or an outside party, such as a credit agency, this process should be as automatic, painless and protective of privacy as possible.

But if done carefully, this new approach could help customers save money as they replace their gas-fueled cars and furnaces with electric vehicles, heat pumps and other zero-emission technology, and roughly double their household electricity use.

To be clear, this plan does nothing to limit the total amount of money utilities are allowed to bill their customers in the future, and the PUC continues to approve massive rate hikes that are making power less affordable. California already has some of the highest electricity rates in the nation. They have roughly doubled over the last decade and are forecasted to rise as much as 26% by 2025.

California needs to race toward home and vehicle electrification to confront a worsening climate crisis. If done with care and caution, this redesign of electricity rates and charges can smooth the transition to a zero-emission future and minimize customer backlash.

Regulators should take pains to get it right.

Walking to school should not be deadly

Redesigning L.A.'s streets to slow cars would reduce the chance of pedestrians being mowed down.

On Tuesday morning, what should have been a perfectly routine, pleasant stroll by mother and child to Hancock Park Elementary School became a tragedy for the entire community.

A pickup truck plowed into the pair in a crosswalk next to the school before it crashed into an apartment building. The mother died at the scene and her daughter was critically injured. Police said the driver may have been impaired and speeding.

This is an all-too-common horror in Los Angeles. The mother was the 48th pedestrian killed by a vehicle this year; the city is on pace to repeat last year's spike in pedestrian fatalities, which at 159 was the highest number of lives lost in 20 years, according to the advocacy group Streets Are For Everyone.

It's too easy to chalk up the fatalities to circumstance and individual decisions. After all, you might ask, what possibly can be done to stop a speeding driver under the influence of drugs or alcohol? A lot, actually. Roads can be designed to reduce the likelihood of a collision and to force drivers to slow down enough to avoid causing serious injury and death if they crash.

In fact, Hancock Park Elementary School has been slated for a crosswalk safety project at the crash site for more than a year. The Mid City West Neighborhood Council budgeted money for a painted curb extension, which would narrow the street and shorten the time pedestrians are exposed to cars. But the city's Department of Transportation hasn't installed the extension yet because the agency is short-staffed. It's impossible to say whether the project would have prevented this collision, but it's clear that families and school officials knew the streets around campus were dangerous and had been clamoring for traffic-calming measures.

Hancock Park Elementary is not unique in tragedy. Deadly crashes on school routes have happened over and over. Councilmember Katy Yaroslavsky, who represents the Hancock Park area, said that she regularly sees drivers speeding and running red lights when she walks her child to school. Parents are already worried about safety at schools from guns, drugs or other issues. With the streets, Yaroslavsky said, "this is something local government can do something about."

She's right — the city has enormous power to make streets safer, but elected leaders haven't used that power. Former Mayor Eric Garcetti pledged to eliminate traffic fatalities by 2025, but he never gave Vision Zero the funding or political support to make that a reality. The City Council is now considering a program to install speed humps around elementary schools, which is a smart idea. Again, such programs are half-measures without the funding, staffing and political will to carry them out. The lack of manpower has consistently hampered street redesigns.

Traffic fatalities are often preventable tragedies. City leaders allow dangerous conditions to continue by failing to invest in road safety projects or by scaling back or scrapping safety projects when motorists complain. (Looking at you, Culver City, where the City Council voted this week to roll back a project that made it safer to walk and bike in its downtown.)

How many more lives will be sacrificed to motorists' convenience and speed? L.A. leaders know how to make the roads safer. Tolerating deadly streets is a choice.

MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

POLICE OFFICERS investigate the scene of a deadly crash Tuesday near Hancock Park Elementary School.

LETTERS

MARY ALTAFFER Associated Press

OPRAH WINFREY, seen in 2019, would be a good fill-in if Sen. Dianne Feinstein resigns, says a reader.

Sen. Oprah — why not?

Re "Newsom could face tough task replacing Feinstein in Senate," column, April 24

Even though it seemed tongue in cheek, columnist George Skelton's suggestion that Gov. Gavin Newsom appoint Oprah Winfrey to fill the Senate seat that could soon be vacated by Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) is great.

She certainly is a Democrat. Her positions are known, and she is politic, bright, affable and capable of dealing with issues and people. As a member of the Senate she could be effective from the beginning, because she is a well-known and respected woman.

Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Oakland) is a good choice too, and I want to see Black women in the Senate. But she's running for a full term already, so let's give her and the other great candidates an equal chance in 2024.

We could also engage with Oprah in a campaign to elect more Black women from across the country to the Senate. Californians can do this.

CHERYL YOUNGER
Los Angeles

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For the very reason that Lee is not as well-known as he 2024 opponents Reps. Adam B. Schiff (D-Burbank) or Katie Porter (D-Irvine) in the southern part of this state, Newsom should honor his pledge to appoint a Black woman to replace Feinstein should she decide to resign.

This would allow all Californians the opportunity to see what a sage and capable legislator Lee is.

Recall that Lee was the only member of Congress to vote against the Authorization for Use of Military Force on Sept. 14, 2001, which started an open-ended war against "terror" that has drained our national budget.

PAUL MCDERMOTT
Los Angeles

We're not No. 1 on clean energy

Re "How California could enlighten America," Opinion, April 23

In discussing California's enlightened policies, Thad Kousser omitted solving the climate crisis. Perhaps it was for a good reason: Data show Vermont, not California, leads the nation in terms of the carbon intensity of its energy sources.

Still, California has a great opportunity. We are the world's fifth-largest economy. If we were leading the nation on climate change, we would be a sparkling example to the world that businesses can grow and economies can thrive while we solve this important issue.

California is ahead of all other states in solar energy. However, the subsidy by way of net metering nearly disappeared this month for most solar customers.

I can agree to removing the subsidy for the wealthiest, but if we truly want to have solar on every roof (which should be the goal), let's have better net metering for the other folks.

California leads the nation in many areas but falls short in others. I would like to see us lead in solving the climate crisis.

JOEL SHAPIRO
Venice

Big traffic woes in a small city

Re "Developers find legal footing to fight NIMBYism," April 24

Your article disparages La Cañada Flintridge without including some important information about the new multifamily housing development.

I believe the project, bounded on two sides by a church, is much too large for the parcel size.

The article describes the community as a "peaceful refuge from the bustle of Los Angeles, an affluent bastion." In reality, we deal with traffic beyond our control.

Our "peaceful refuge" has been split down the middle by the 210 Freeway since the mid-1970s.

Furthermore, Angeles Crest Highway intersects Foothill Boulevard smack in the middle of town. In 2009, a big rig barreling down that road crashed through the intersection at Foothill, killing two people in a car. Angeles Crest has become a raceway for hot cars going up the hill, especially on the weekends.

Your article says the city's battle over development dates to the 1980s. It predates that, to the mid-1970s, when residents realized that for us to have any control of our neighborhoods (say, the location of a freeway or traffic on Angeles Crest), incorporating as a city was necessary.

LELA LINDSEY
La Cañada Flintridge

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OP-ED

How can L.A. Metro make train service safer?

Look for strategies from the bus fleet, where there's less crime. It's not because rubber tires maintain the peace.

By Madeline Brozen

Los Angeles Metro is taking steps to improve public transportation safety for riders. Transit agency officials are deploying more security and law enforcement, introducing transit ambassadors, promoting their Transit Watch app to report crimes, and playing music in stations to deter unwanted behaviors. However, these strategies may not be sufficient to address the growing violence and drug use on the system. Instead, L.A. Metro should look to its buses — where crime is significantly lower — for inspiration.

The types of crimes on transit are varied, from prohibited behaviors like smoking or drug use, vandalism or theft, to assaults and other violent crimes. In January 2023, train riders experienced roughly 7 crimes per 200,000 passengers, and bus riders experienced 1 crime for the same number of people. The bus system provided 16.4 million monthly trips and experienced 88 crimes. The rail system provided 2.2 million monthly trips, and passengers experienced 171 crimes.

Buses aren't safer because their rubber tires act like crime-fighting vigilantes. The most likely explanation for why buses are safer is because more people use them.

Brian van der Brug Los Angeles Times

L.A. METRO should consider increasing service for all weekend sporting events and concerts.

Buses have always been the backbone of L.A.'s transit system, carrying four times more passengers than trains. The rebounds in ridership since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic are a good example. Average weekday train ridership has yet to hit 50% of pre-pandemic levels, while the bus system has fared better, with 77% of those riders returning. Ridership and service levels are closely connected, so it's no surprise that ridership gains have followed as L.A. Metro restored pre-pandemic bus service levels. In contrast, rail service (and ridership) levels remain lower than pre-COVID.

Prioritizing bus service levels over rail is a notable departure from L.A. Metro's focus on rail system expansion. L.A. Metro's critics commonly decry rail system expansion because people who ride the train are more likely to be wealthier and white and have access to cars than those who use the bus system. On the other hand, bus riders tend to rely on public transit as their primary mode of transportation. They are L.A. Metro's core customers, so it's not surprising these passengers have returned.

As fewer people rode public transit — particularly the train system — social norms eroded. Behaviors changed from minor issues like passengers putting their feet on seats to more concerning behaviors like smoking cigarettes or openly using drugs. In January 2023, L.A. Metro reported 37 so-called crimes against society on the train, such as smoking or drug use, compared with 21 reports in January 2019.

The best way forward is to take lessons from the bus and get more people on board to enforce public transit's social norms. These social norms and unspoken rules of engagement guide the public transit experience. Someone's quiet, uneventful journey is often reinforced by other people doing the same, with an occasional moment of people coming together to help. Those moments like when a passenger is standing at the rear bus exit trying to leave, and a chorus of other passengers shouts "BACK DOOR" to make sure the driver can hear the request.

The good news is that L.A. Metro's current budget proposal includes increasing rail service levels as soon as this summer. But how can a virtuous cycle begin where ridership comes back as service levels increase? One approach is focusing on rail riders who are not weekday commuters.

Researchers at Stanford University found that in 2023, workers spend an average of 1-2 days a week working from home. With fewer office workers making trips to the office, orienting transit service around traditional peak commuting patterns no longer makes sense. The fact that average Sunday bus ridership has seen 98% of ridership levels return is evidence of these shifting travel patterns. L.A. Metro should pay attention to increasing service for all weekend sporting events and concerts and show non-regular riders a high-quality weekend experience that may tempt their return to weekday trips.

Another lesson from the bus is to activate areas where people wait. Bus stops have nearby stores, restaurants and pedestrians, all of which provide natural surveillance. Rail stations can feel empty and isolated. Allowing licensed street vendors to set up on station platforms is an opportunity to mimic street-level vibrancy. They could also provide tasty treats for people to enjoy when wait times are longer than expected. Limits exist to make the train like a bus on steel tracks and get more people on board. Stations cannot move closer to people's homes or destinations. Passengers cannot stand next to the train operator and chat if they feel unsafe. Sunshine isn't an option below ground.

Whatever steps L.A. Metro takes to address crime should be good solutions for transit in general, not just for safety. Increasing train service levels will not solve our societal problems in Los Angeles. More service will not lower our population of people experiencing homelessness, nor will it take fentanyl out of communities. But increasing service can increase ridership, which has proved to reduce crime. The bus system's relationship between more riders and less crime is proof positive. It's time to stop looking for innovative or new solutions when the answer has been roaming the streets all along.

Madeline Brozen is deputy director of the UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies.

If Feinstein resigns, let Californians choose their next senator

By Zachary Clopton and Steve Art

With pressure mounting on Sen. Dianne Feinstein to resign before the end of her term, it's important to understand what the Constitution requires if or when that happens. The short answer: an election.

Even if Feinstein resigns soon, however, California law doesn't require an election to fill the vacancy until the next general election, more than a year and a half from now. The state can serve the voters and the Constitution better by holding a special election in the near term.

In the event of a vacancy in the Senate, both the 17th Amendment to the Constitution and California election law permit Gov. Gavin Newsom to make a temporary appointment to fill the seat — much as he did in appointing Alex Padilla to the state's other Senate seat. But the Constitution also requires an election allowing the people of California to decide who will serve the remainder of the unexpired term. If Feinstein does decide to vacate her seat, California should heed that constitutional and democratic imperative by calling a special election as soon as practically possible.

U.S. senators haven't always been elected. For the first century and a half of this country's history, they were selected by state legislatures. That changed during the Progressive Era, when pressure to democratize American government led to the adoption of the 17th Amendment, which took effect in 1913.

Elections are the 17th Amendment's focus. It commands that the people directly elect their U.S. senators to six-year terms.

Of course, sometimes senators will leave office before their terms expire. Prior to the 17th Amendment's ratification, such vacancies were traditionally filled by gubernatorial appointment. The 17th Amendment did not entirely eliminate gubernatorial appointments; instead, it says a state legislature may authorize a governor to appoint a temporary replacement until the state holds an election to fill the seat.

These two features of the amendment — appointment and election — can work together to promote democratic values. Although appointees are not chosen by voters, they do ensure that the people of a state will not be without full representation. They can also counteract antidemocratic aspects of the political process by empowering underrepresented communities.

For example, nine of the first 13 women to serve in the Senate arrived as gubernatorial appointees. The first, Rebecca Latimer Felton of Georgia, was appointed by a governor looking for political cover after opposing women's suffrage. And two of the earliest elected female senators had previously served as appointees.

Despite these advantages, the amendment is clear on the point that they are only temporary and that states must hold elections to fill every vacancy in the Senate. Elections are the 17th Amendment's lodestar.

That's not to say that the states always follow this constitutional requirement. In studying more than 200 vacancies since 1913, we found that states have failed to hold a vacancy-filling election in roughly one-sixth of cases.

When Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich attempted to sell the Senate seat Barack Obama left to become president, state law would have allowed his appointed replacement to complete the term without an election. It took a lawsuit in federal court to force Illinois to comply with the Constitution and hold an election to fill the vacancy.

Even when states formally comply with the election requirement, we found that many dragged their feet, needlessly delaying the opportunity for voters to weigh in. Since 1913, more than 60 Senate vacancies have lasted longer than a year before an election was held. Indeed, California's Padilla, whom Newsom appointed when Kamala Harris left her seat to become vice president, served almost two years as an unelected appointee before winning a vacancy-filling election last fall. That was when the state held a special election to fill the last couple of months of Harris' term concurrently with the general election for the next six-year term.

All told, since ratification of the 17th Amendment, temporary appointments have deprived the American people of a total of more than 200 years of elected representation.

That brings us back to Feinstein. The people of California are entitled to directly elect two U.S. senators. If another of those senators leaves office, the governor should use his legal authority to ensure that the people are represented by an appointee in the short term, and he should consider using his appointment power to expand the diversity of political representation in the Senate.

But even the most praiseworthy appointee should not be allowed to hold the office for months on end without an election. California law would allow Newsom's appointee to serve until at least November 2024, when the term will be nearly finished. The Constitution would require an election to fill Feinstein's term, and the state should hold one expeditiously.

If Feinstein resigns, Newsom should work with the Legislature to schedule a special election according to the letter and spirit of the Constitution. While turnout tends to be lower in special elections, modern efforts to make voting easier — including early voting, mail-in ballots and automatic registration — can mitigate that problem.

Pairing any appointment with a speedy special election would be the best way to honor Feinstein's long career in elective office and our democratic values. It's also what the Constitution requires.

Zachary Clopton is a professor at Northwestern University's Pritzker School of Law. Steve Art is a civil rights attorney at Loevy & Loevy.

The U.S. should help Americans fleeing Sudan

By Sherine Tadros

Sudan has descended into chaos as rival military leaders fight for power in the East African nation. Since the violence broke out April 15 in Khartoum, the capital, hundreds have been killed. The U.S. Embassy was shut down after the U.S. Navy's SEAL Team 6 and the Army's special forces evacuated American diplomatic staff. But thousands of other U.S. citizens are finding themselves stuck.

On Monday, U.S. officials announced a 72-hour cease-fire following talks, yet fighting has persisted in some areas and a previous cease-fire also fell apart within hours. There are reportedly an estimated 16,000 American citizens registered at the U.S. Embassy in Sudan. British and other European officials boasted of successful evacuations of their nationals. In a series of television appearances this week, National Security Council spokesman John F. Kirby said it's hard to know exactly how many Americans are still in Sudan, but the "vast majority" are dual-nationals, who have "no intention of leaving or wanting to depart." His advice? Shelter in place, "hunker down and stay safe." Though the U.S. is helping some people travel by land, the situation is not secure enough to conduct a mass evacuation, he said.

Those I've spoken to in Sudan feel abandoned by the international community. Heavy weaponry including artillery, tanks and jet aircraft have been used in densely populated areas in Khartoum. Human rights and aid organizations have reported that civilians are bearing the brunt of the fighting. Food and fuel prices have soared, and there are power and water outages. Americans are among thousands rushing to Port Sudan along the Red Sea, where the U.S. says it has naval and intelligence assets, and to the Egyptian border to get out. As the U.S. and its partners negotiate with Sudan's warring parties, there must also be a plan for protecting and helping civilians as the conflict, and resulting humanitarian crisis, worsen.

A close friend of mine, who holds a British passport, was on his way to Port Sudan on a bus — a treacherous nine-hour journey — with his relatives, including his 80-year-old mother and two young children. When he arrived at the port, he told me via text message, there were no evacuations happening for dual-nationals like him and his family, despite what the embassy had told him. Instead, they are all stranded with no information on when, or even if, they will be able to get out.

The fighting in Sudan comes after weeks of tension between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a paramilitary force, and the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) over security force reform during negotiations for a new transitional government. The RSF and SAF jointly overthrew Sudan's transitional government in October 2021, after popular uprisings deposed longtime President Omar Bashir in 2019.

Another friend in Khartoum — whose house was looted by armed men and car stolen and who was threatened at gunpoint — fled with his family to the Egyptian border. Along with thousands of other Sudanese, they have waited for the last three days for Egyptian officials to process them. Amid the sound of crying babies, they wait on the hot concrete floor at the border crossing with no idea when their turn will come, and even whether they will be allowed entry to Egypt. One family was turned away because their child didn't have the right paperwork.

These are people who left their homes and belongings overnight. And they are considered the lucky ones. For most people in Sudan, there are no good options — stay in your house and pray that it's not bombed or raided, or try and get to a border and beg for entry. One Sudanese woman told me via phone she didn't have her passport because it was at one of the embassies that had been shut down: "I applied for a visa weeks ago, it was being processed and now there isn't even anyone to speak to at the embassy. They are all gone."

There is no end in sight for the suffering of people in Sudan. The U.S. has faced criticism previously for leaving behind U.S. citizens in conflict zones, such as in 2015 when war broke out in Yemen, and during the American withdrawal of Afghanistan. In the last year, however, we have seen the international community react in a humane way in times of crisis, most recently in Ukraine when those escaping Russia's aggression were flown out and welcomed in the U.S., Europe and elsewhere. This is not what is happening in Sudan.

There is no coordinated, forceful action by international governments or the United Nations, let alone a plan for those seeking asylum and making it across the borders — only statements of concern by officials. The U.N. and others should have robust setups at the refugee camps receiving those fleeing, and yet we see little movement. The lack of extensive U.S. media coverage of what is happening on the ground, or outrage at this attack on civilians in Africa, is saddening but unsurprising.

The next few days in Sudan are critical, and the window of opportunity for any safe evacuation is quickly closing. Governments worldwide, including the U.S., have a responsibility to help their citizens get to safety. But their responsibility does not end there as the humanitarian situation inside the country continues to deteriorate and U.N. agencies warn of imminent shortages in food, medicine and water.

Unless international assistance arrives soon, the rest of the Sudanese people, those who cannot afford the hundreds of dollars it now costs to get a bus to the border or don't have foreign passports or visas will be trapped in a burgeoning war — with no way out.

Sherine Tadros is the deputy director of advocacy and U.N. representative for Amnesty International based in New York.

BOTTEGA VENETA
SOUTH COAST PLAZA 714 540 9760

CALIFORNIA

Freeze on cop photos rejected

Judge denies L.A.'s bid for a restraining order against a group that published officer data.

By Richard Winton

Efforts by the city of Los Angeles to force a journalist and a police watchdog group to return more than 9,000 photos and names of LAPD officers were dealt a blow this week when a judge rejected a request for a temporary restraining order that would have prevented them from doing anything with the data.

The judge said that the case was essentially about prior restraint and that the city would need to address it before any decisions are made in the case.

The case stems from the city's release of the photos, names and other data last year in response to a California Public Records Act request and related litigation.

Attorneys for the city filed a lawsuit last month against Knock LA journalist Ben Camacho and the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, saying the release of the officers' names, photos and serial numbers on a data drive to Camacho was "inadvertent."

They argued that the publication of images of officers who serve in undercover assignments posed a safety risk to the officers. After receiving the photos, Camacho provided them to the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, which published them online last month.

On Tuesday, the attorneys asked the judge to approve the restraining order to stop Camacho and the co-

[See **LAPD,** B2]

Photographs by Irfan Khan Los Angeles Times

THE NOB FIRE burns in the San Bernardino National Forest on Wednesday. The first large wildfire of the season in California had burned about 160 acres and was 0% contained as of Wednesday evening. **B5**

Heat wave kicks off across state, but should be brief

Upcoming cold front could limit worst of flooding risks

By Grace Toohey

Temperatures across California started to rise Wednesday, kicking off a heat wave that's expected to bring some of the state's warmest days so far this year.

Highs are forecast to reach into the 90s and 100s by Saturday, which is expected to trigger increased snowmelt and flooding, primarily in the Central Valley.

But weather officials said the heat affecting almost all of California should be short-lived, with a cold front expected to move in as early as Sunday and help stave off the worst-case scenario for flooding.

"It does look like after this hot spell, temperatures are going to remain below normal for a while after that," said David Spector, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Hanford. "It's going to prevent [the flooding]

[See **Heat wave,** B5]

ABOUT 150 firefighters are battling the blaze, which is not a threat to surrounding communities, according to San Bernardino officials.

11 YEARS FOR SEX ABUSE AT UCLA

Former gynecologist Heaps was a noted cancer specialist who preyed on his patients.

By Nathan Solis

Disgraced ex-UCLA gynecologist James Heaps was sentenced to 11 years in prison on Wednesday, nearly two years after he was indicted for sexually abusing his patients while working at the university.

Heaps, 66, has been in custody since October, when a jury found him guilty of three counts of sexual battery by fraud and two counts of sexual penetration of two patients.

Heaps, a retired cancer specialist, appeared in a Burbank courtroom Wednesday wearing an orange prison jumpsuit, neat goatee and glasses. He did not testify or make any statements after he was sentenced by Judge Michael D. Carter.

Although he was charged with 21 felony counts, Heaps was found not guilty of seven other counts, including one of sexual exploitation. Carter declared a mistrial on nine sex-related counts due to a deadlocked jury.

Jurors found that Heaps' victims were particularly vulnerable and that he abused a position of trust as their doctor.

The assaults date from 2013 to 2017, the portion of his tenure that falls within the statute of limitations for which criminal charges could be brought.

The University of California system has agreed to pay nearly $700 million to settle lawsuits brought by hun-

[See **Sentence,** B2]

Rapper stabbed to death in prison

MoneySign Suede was found in shower at facility in Monterey County, attorney says.

By Keri Blakinger, Kenan Draughorne and Salvador Hernandez

MoneySign Suede, a young and popular Los Angeles rapper, was stabbed to death Tuesday night in a shower at a California prison, according to his attorney.

Officials with the Monterey County coroner's office and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation confirmed Suede's death at the Correctional Training Facility in Soledad, but they did not immediately comment on how the 22-year-old died.

Suede's real name was Jaime Brugada Valdez. He was from Huntington Park.

In a statement, CDCR officials said the rapper was found unresponsive just before 10 p.m. after correctional officers found that he was not in his cell during a regular count. Officials said he was found "with injuries consistent with a homicide."

"People are very shocked," said Valdez's at-

[See **Rapper,** B5]

Allen J. Schaben Los Angeles Times

ASSEMBLYMEMBER Wendy Carrillo plans to campaign for the council post held by Kevin de León, who hasn't announced a reelection bid.

Wendy Carrillo explains her run for De León's seat

Eastside lawmaker is taking on her former ally

GUSTAVO ARELLANO

The sun began to bake us the moment we stepped out of Wendy Carrillo's home in Boyle Heights last Saturday. But the scorching morning rays were the least of her annoyances.

The Eastside Assembly member had spent the last half-hour explaining to me why she is running for Kevin de León's City Council seat.

"Mayor Karen Bass has an incredible challenge," the El Sereno resident said as she closed the gate behind us, a loquat tree offering temporary shade. "And she currently doesn't have a partner in [District] 14. It's a challenge when you have someone in office that folks don't want to associate with."

De León, of course, became a political pariah after a secretly recorded conversation released last fall featured him, along with then-L.A. County Federation of Labor head Ron Herrera and then-Councilmembers Nury Martinez and Gil Cedillo, trashing rivals with racist and nasty words. He has ignored demands from community members and President Biden to resign, recently survived a fourth recall attempt and keeps taunting his haters with slickly edited Instagram reels of himself gallivanting around Council District 14 as if nothing ever happened.

Carrillo, a

[See **Arellano,** B2]

CAPITOL JOURNAL

Newsom's second-in-command enters race to replace him

GEORGE SKELTON
IN SACRAMENTO

They're starting to line up to run for governor to replace lame duck Gov. Gavin Newsom when his term expires after 2026. Yes, already.

The first in line Monday was Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis, 57.

A few hours later, former state Controller Betty Yee, 65, said she plans to run too.

They're Democrats, of course — the only political type who can be elected governor or U.S. senator in California these days.

If Kounalakis, Yee or another woman is elected, she'll be California's first female governor. There have been 40 governors over nearly 173 years, and we've elected only white males — in this, ironically, the most diverse state in the nation.

The next gubernatorial election won't be held for three years. Why start running now?

It lays down a marker and dares rivals to jump in, perhaps before they're ready. It's an attempt to announce your presence to voters who have only a vague notion of who you are, if that. And it allows you to start organizing a campaign without being too cute by forming a so-called exploratory committee. Just shout it out truthfully: "I'm running."

Most of all, it permits you to start raising the barrels of money it requires to run a successful race for governor in California, especially for candidates with low name recognition such as Kounalakis and Yee. The cost of living in California is exorbitant, and so is cam-

[See **Skelton,** B4]

Bill would end defiance suspensions

The punishment, already not allowed in grades K-5, would also be banned in middle through high school. **B3**

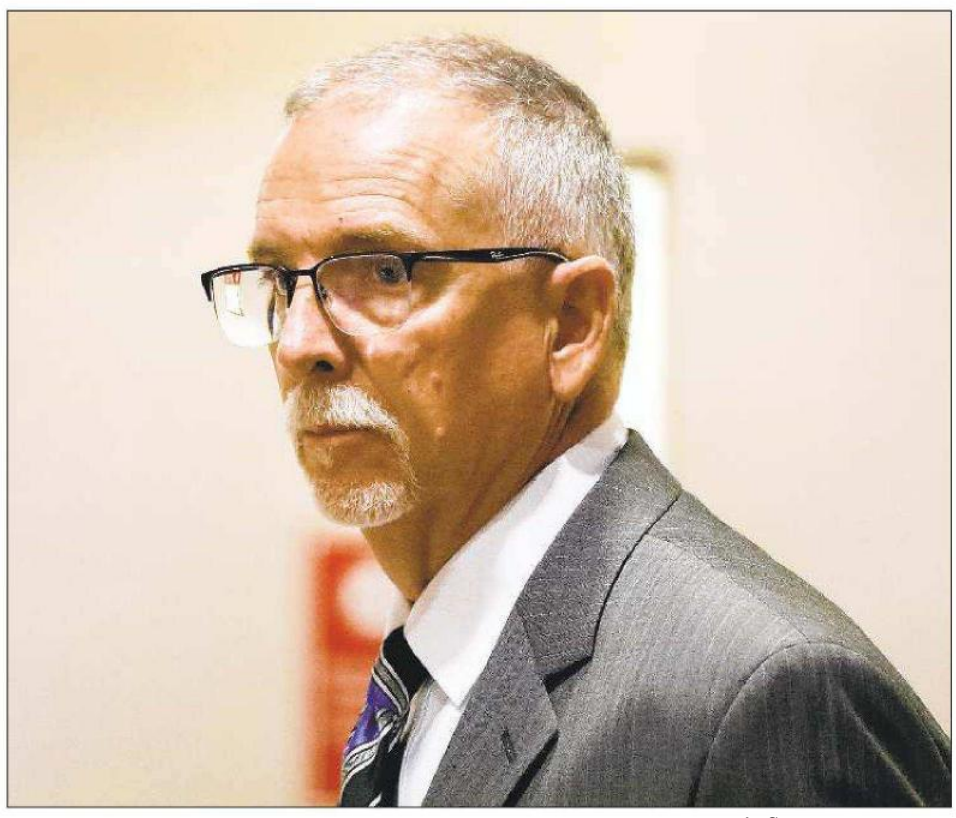
Man faults city in machete attack

Brent Meldeau, 53, files a claim after he was wounded on his way to the Chatsworth Metro Station in March. **B3**

Lottery **B2**

SPORTS ON THE BACK: Top NFL quarterback prospects have roots in Southland. **B12**

Doctor gets an 11-year term



AL SEIB Los Angeles Times

THE UC system has agreed to pay nearly $700 million to settle lawsuits brought by hundreds of James Heaps' alleged victims. Above, Heaps in court in 2019.

[**Sentence,** from B1]
dreds of Heaps' alleged victims.

"For four years we have been fighting," Ellen Cater, one of the plaintiffs in the case, said after the sentencing. "Today we finally have a reason to smile. I hope that the settlement by UCLA and today's sentencing will encourage any victims of sexual assault to come forward."

She said she felt alone when she first came forward with her claims of sexual abuse but was able to unite with the other women.

"Now the healing can begin."

Other victims said in written statements they still suffer extreme anxiety and no longer trust male doctors because of the sexual abuse by Heaps.

"I'm still living with a lot of anxiety. I've gone to some very dark places in my thoughts," Jane T. said in a written statement that was read in court before the sentencing.

Natalie B., one of the women Heaps was found guilty of abusing, said she gave birth to three daughters at the UCLA medical facility where Heaps worked.

"I was proud to be a patient there," Natalie B. said in a statement read in court by a prosecutor. "It has been absolutely ruined. ... The defendant has made the place where my babies were born a traumatizing trigger."

His victims trusted "their bodies and lives" to Heaps due to his reputation as a world-renowned cancer specialist, Carter said.

After he serves his sentence, Heaps will be required to register as a sex offender. He has already served more than a year in jail awaiting trial.

Prosecutors asked for a 13-year-prison sentence, the maximum amount of time under the charges of which Heaps was found guilty.

Assistant Head Deputy Dist. Atty. Danette Meyers said Heaps sexually abused his patients out of arrogance, because he thought he could get away with it.

> 'He's someone who has done a lot of good in his life. This is a blip in that career.'
>
> — TRACY BROWN, defense attorney

"We hold our doctors to a certain level of professionalism. We go to them with our most serious issues in life and we say to them: 'Help us,' " Meyers said. "Now he's got to face the music and pay for it."

She took issue with the defense attorneys' claims that Heaps should be given a lower-end sentence.

"What the defendant did in this case was wrong," Meyers said. "These victims suffered this wrong."

Heaps' defense attorneys asked the court to consider his extensive career as an oncologist and gynecologist.

"He gave a lot of his career to UCLA," attorney Tracy Brown said before he was sentenced. "He's someone who has done a lot of good in his life."

"This is a blip in that career," Brown said.

Before he was sentenced, Heaps asked for a new trial for multiple reasons, including his claim that he received ineffective advice from his attorney to not testify during the criminal trial and that could have changed the jury's verdict.

Carter denied the request, ruling that an attorney would not be able to keep a client from testifying.

While his attorneys argued for a new trial before Carter, Heaps repeatedly wrote notes to his defense team and anxiously fidgeted in his chair.

He was denied probation after Carter heard arguments from the attorneys.

Despite years of complaints about Heaps, who treated about 6,000 patients during his tenure, it was not until late 2017 that allegations of sexual misconduct were reported to UCLA's Title IX office and a formal investigation was opened.

Heaps was allowed to continue seeing patients — during the investigation and after UCLA informed the doctor his contract would not be renewed when it expired on June 30, 2018. UCLA finally ended Heaps' employment and notified the police of the allegations in June 2018.

Heaps was arrested a year later and charged with two counts of sexual battery by fraud and one count of sexual exploitation in connection with acts involving two patients.

Until that arrest, UCLA had not made public or told former patients that a year before, Heaps had been investigated for sexual abuse. Subsequently, a grand jury indicted him on 21 felonies involving seven victims.

It's still unclear whether the district attorney's office will attempt to retry Heaps on the nine counts that resulted in a hung jury.

Outside the Burbank courthouse, defense attorney Leonard Levine said he was disappointed in the court's decision to give his client more than 10 years. He said his client will appeal the court's decision.

When asked if Heaps was remorseful, Levine said he was remorseful for anything he did that was inappropriate.

"But he has adamantly denied any of the criminal offenses," Levine said.

Attorneys Jennifer McGrath and Darren Kavinoky, who represented the victims in a civil lawsuit against UCLA, called the sentencing a message to other victims.

"Please pay attention to this day," McGrath said.

Times staff writer Richard Winton contributed to this report.

Judge sides with group that posted LAPD photos

[**LAPD,** from B1]
alition from "transferring, concealing, removing or otherwise disposing of" the photos and other information. Lawyers for Camacho have filed to have the case dismissed as unconstitutional and retaliatory.

Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Mitchell Beckloff declined to issue the restraining order and labeled the city's legal brief confusing.

Beckloff said the city was trying to prevent the dissemination or publication of the information, but he told the city's lawyers: "You really don't address the prior restraint issue. You buried the lead." He said the city needed to address the pivotal U.S. Supreme Court case on prior restraint — Nebraska Press Assn. vs. Stuart — and whether the injunction would be effective.

City lawyers insisted they aren't seeking to prevent publication but want to prevent Camacho and the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition from allowing other people to download the photos.

In one of several declarations filed by the city, LAPD Capt. Jonathan Tippet, who oversees the Robbery-Homicide Division, wrote that the publication had exposed the photos of undercover officers, including those of the Special Investigation Section, which conducts surveillance on suspects in violent serial crimes. Tippet said the images "permanently endangered the lives of the officers" and "jeopardize the investigation of significant criminal cases."

Also Tuesday, Camacho said on Twitter that Microsoft had taken down a folder filled with headshots in a cloud drive for "violating terms of service." Camacho previously tweeted a link to the folder, which contained the names and photos of 9,300 LAPD officers.

The legal team for Camacho filed a motion last week alleging that the litigation is a so-called SLAPP lawsuit, an improper lawsuit used by public officials to censor or intimidate someone from exercising their free speech.

"The City of Los Angeles' lawsuit is a thinly veiled attempt to silence Mr. Camacho and other journalists who report on law enforcement," Dan Stormer, one of the attorneys for Camacho, said at a news conference last week. "The real motives behind this lawsuit are to shield the Los Angeles Police Department from any measure of accountability and transparency."

Other attorneys representing Camacho include Susan Seager, head of UC Irvine School of Law's Press Freedom Project.

In their motion, the lawyers argue that the city's attempt to undo the publication of the officers' photos and information amounts to an infringement on Camacho's freedom of speech. Such a ploy, they wrote, is barred by the state's anti-SLAPP statute.

The motion says that the city willingly gave Camacho the records six months ago to settle the lawsuit he brought under the Public Records Act and that city officials wrote Camacho a letter saying the records did not include any officers working "undercover."

The motion also states that the city failed to define an undercover assignment and that its claims of threats to officer safety are conjecture.

Knock LA and the Stop LAPD Spying Coalition have denounced the lawsuit in separate statements. Knock LA called it a "clear intimidation tactic" by City Atty. Hydee Feldstein Soto. The Stop LAPD Spying Coalition, a frequent critic of the Police Department's use of surveillance technology, called it "an attack on the public's ability to request, analyze, and publish public records."

Legal experts uniformly rejected the lawsuit as baseless and ripe for dismissal on 1st Amendment grounds and other well-established legal protections for journalists.

Hamid Khan, a coordinator with Stop LAPD Spying, said Camacho shared the officers' images and information with his organization. The group then posted them online as part of a public, searchable database called "Watch the Watchers," which includes each officer's name, ethnicity, rank, date of hire, division or bureau, serial number and photo.

The union representing rank-and-file LAPD officers subsequently sued Chief Michel Moore over the release of the photos, hoping to force the department to stop disclosing such images and try to claw back those already released. More than 300 officers who claim to work in sensitive assignments have also given notice that they intend to sue the city, accusing it of negligence and endangering their lives by releasing the images.

Carrillo to run against De León, a former ally

[**Arellano,** from B1]
former De León ally, had no ambitions to run until her staffers began to hear from constituents complaining that the council member's office wasn't returning their calls for city services. Carrillo's team forwarded those complaints to his team. Silence.

"It wasn't always like that," said the 42-year-old, as we reached Avenida Cesar Chavez. "Before, we worked together. There's a different political dynamic now."

Her frown turned into a scowl at the scene before us.

Cracks and bumps made the sidewalk look like a motorbike track. Tree limbs in need of a trimming hung perilously over buildings. Graffiti was everywhere.

"It's simple things that make life easier," Carrillo explained, as she greeted shopkeepers in Spanish. "Lights that work. Potholes that get filled. A caretaker that actually cares about their responsibility to serve the community as an elected official."

It was so hot that I suggested we walk on the side of the street that had shade, but she was on a roll.

"The majority of these buildings aren't owned by the people who run the businesses," she continued, decrying the gentrification that has clawed its way into Boyle Heights over the last decade under De León and his predecessor, Jose Huizar. Just as she said that, we passed by a giant showroom that now stood gutted.

She shook her head. "It was a cowboy store. Who knows what it's going to be now?"

Her candidacy, which she will officially announce Thursday, makes her one of five people who have already declared their intentions to run against De León, even though the primary isn't until March. The list includes former Councilmember Nick Pacheco and current Assemblymember Miguel Santiago (D-Los Angeles), and is expected to grow because opponents sense a vulnerable incumbent.

ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

"WHEN THE council member's objective ... was to become mayor, taking care of murals is not a priority," Carrillo says of De León, as she passes a defaced mural.

I'm not counting out De León, an obstinate politico who hasn't yet announced a reelection bid but isn't likely to go gentle into that good night. But if anyone can take him down, it's Carrillo, who's so Eastside that her campaign colors are red and gold in honor of her alma mater, Roosevelt High.

As a freshman, the native of El Salvador was one of tens of thousands of students across California who walked out of class in the fall of 1994 to protest Proposition 187, the ballot initiative that sought to make life miserable for immigrants in the country illegally. For nearly a decade, Carrillo hosted a public affairs radio show on Power 106 that highlighted community activists across Southern California.

She worked for Huizar and has served in the Assembly since 2017. One of her proudest accomplishments in Sacramento, she said, was authoring a bill that created a compensation fund for hundreds of Latinas sterilized without their permission at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center in the 1960s and 1970s.

"That work was started by Gloria Molina," said Carrillo, referring to the legendary Eastside *política* who first gained mainstream attention in the 1970s when she and other Chicanas filed an unsuccessful lawsuit on behalf of the sterilized women. "Why did it take until now to try and finish it? That's what happens when communities get neglected for so long."

Carrillo has already secured the endorsements of Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon and former Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa.

"She's not a soulless political animal obsessed with careerism, speaking in pithy aphorisms, and participating in symbolic ribbon-cutting ceremonies," Rendon said, in a dig at De León. "She's singularly courageous."

Villaraigosa described her as having "the heart of a lion."

"In many ways, she reminds me of Gloria — she's tough on the outside but leads on the inside for her constituents," he said.

Carrillo had told only a few allies about her plans when we did our Saturday walk-and-talk. When she ran into Brenda Martinez, a member of the Boyle Heights Neighborhood Council, she would only say with a knowing grin, "There's a big announcement coming soon."

Martinez stayed silent for a second, then embraced Carrillo and clapped.

"She's from here and understands the pros and cons of being a resident in Boyle Heights," Martinez said when I asked why her reaction was so joyous. "And not just Boyle Heights, but the whole district. It's a pot of mixtures ..." she continued, then stopped, tongue-tied.

"I don't know. I'm just excited!"

The two bid farewell, then Carrillo and I made our way to "El Corrido de Boyle Heights," a massive mural painted in 1983 long used for album art and book covers to represent the Eastside at its best. The elements had faded its once-bright colors. Even worse was the mural's bottom half, where graffiti lay over older graffiti and an entire section was painted over with gray paint, which bore even more graffiti.

"My dad said that the moment you see the desecration of public art, it's the beginning of the end of the neighborhood," Carrillo said. "All the murals on the Eastside used to be covered with protective coating. If they got defaced, you could power-wash the graffiti off, and the mural below remains protected. I know there's funds for that, because I worked on the issue when I was a district staffer here."

She stayed silent.

"When the council member's objective to be in office was to become mayor, taking care of murals is not a priority."

We walked back to her home. She bought it in 2015 as a family gathering place. It stands blocks away from Sheridan Street Elementary, where Carrillo attended school through fourth grade until her parents move to City Terrace.

"I personally get mad to see this," she said, pointing to a planter filled with trash and no garbage can in sight. "Can you imagine, Gustavo? This is just a couple of streets we've walked. It's not even about Kevin. It's about respecting this community."

Carrillo greeted her father, who was gardening. She plans to continue her work in Sacramento while campaigning for the council seat back home.

If she wins, Carrillo will be the first woman to represent the Eastside on the City Council since Molina's historic victory 37 years ago, and the first person of Central American descent ever to serve.

"I don't need a poll to tell me about the community needs," she said, looking at her family's loquat tree. Its fruit was a few weeks away from ripening. "I've lived it. I live it now."

Lottery results

For Tuesday, April 25, 2023

Mega Millions
Mega number is **bold**

8-29-46-47-48—**Mega 12**
Jackpot: $26 million

California winners per category:

	No. of winners	Amount of prize(s)
5 + Mega	0	—
5	1	$178,032
4 + Mega	0	—
4	35	$396
3 + Mega	79	$199
3	1,922	$9
2 + Mega	1,687	$9
1 + Mega	13,481	$4
Mega only	32,366	$2

Winning jackpot ticket(s) sold in other states: None

For Wednesday, April 26, 2023

SuperLotto Plus
Mega number is **bold**

4-7-11-23-46—**Mega 8**
Jackpot: $53 million

Powerball
Powerball number is **bold**

2-15-30-35-49—**Powerball 6**
Jackpot: $37 million

Fantasy Five: 13-15-22-26-33

Daily Four: 8-8-3-3

Daily Three (midday): 2-6-6

Daily Three (evening): 0-9-8

Daily Derby:
(4) Big Ben
(3) Hot Shot
(9) Winning Spirit
Race time: 1:46.33

Results on the internet:
www.latimes.com/lottery
General information:
(800) 568-8379
(Results not available at this number)

ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

SEA LION CROSSING

A paddler gets a close-up view of a California sea lion swimming in sunny Dana Point Harbor. Forecasts call for warmth and sunshine this weekend, then a cool-down early next week ahead of a storm.

San Diego OKs tenant protections

Initial council vote mandates landlords give two months' rent for 'no-fault' eviction.

BY PHILLIP MOLNAR

The San Diego City Council has approved a host of new renter protections that faced heavy opposition from landlords, and even some renter advocates.

The council passed the legislation with some changes Tuesday on an 8-1 vote. A second vote May 16 is needed for final approval.

The new law would require a landlord to give two months' rent to a tenant who is evicted for no reason. These "no-fault" evictions include a renter being asked to move for a significant remodel of the property, if the owner decides to take the unit off the rental market or, simply, a landlord deciding after a lease term not to renew a particular tenant.

"Renters in San Diego deserve more protections in the face of rising housing costs and the existing power imbalance between landlords and tenants," said Council President Sean Elo-Rivera. "This is a significant step toward preventing displacement and homelessness."

Renters could still be legally evicted for violating lease agreements, such as not paying rent. City planners said the law was aimed at bad landlords who use "no-fault" lease terminations as a way to remove renters without doing a legal eviction.

Landlord groups, and individual landlords, who spoke at the meeting said the two-month payment — or three months for a senior or disabled person — was unfair because it added to costs. They said it gave them an incentive not to make apartment repairs and probably would lead to fewer rentals as potential landlords gave up on the idea of renting altogether.

Still, renters who spoke at the more than seven-hour meeting argued they lacked protections in the highly competitive and expensive San Diego rental market.

Renter advocacy group San Diego Tenants Union called the renter protections "watered down" and said the two or three months of rent payments to people removed in no-fault evictions were too low.

Some council members proposed changes to the protections, but only one said she would vote no. Councilmember Jennifer Campbell said she voted against because so many of her constituents told her of their opposition to the law.

Councilmember Marni von Wilpert pushed for an amendment that would give landlords more time to comply, which would delay the implementation of the law for some landlords until Jan.1, 2024.

At least 65% of landlords in San Diego are noncorporate "mom and pop" landlords, according to estimates by the Southern California Rental Housing Assn. Many say they have only a few units and already struggle with costs, making more regulations an added burden.

"That is who is going to be hurt, the small guy," said Dan Feder, owner of F&F Property Management, which is based in the North Park neighborhood.

San Diego would go beyond state law, which requires one month of rent for relocation assistance. Right now, the city has no relocation assistance. It is exempt from new state laws because it already had a limited tenant protection law on the books.

Another part of the law that is hotly debated is a stipulation that, after some no-fault evictions, renters be given a chance to renew their tenancy if the property is back on the rental market within five years. This was a point of contention with some advocacy groups that said there should be a guarantee that the person gets to return with the same rent as before.

With rents rising across the nation, many cities have been considering stronger protections for renters. Los Angeles is being sued over its renter protection law, which says a landlord cannot evict a tenant for nonpayment of rent if it doesn't reach a threshold of $1,747 for a one-bedroom and $2,222 for a two-bedroom. Critics argued that bad renters could just shortchange their rents for months and not face eviction.

Molnar writes for the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Man blames city for machete attack

He files a claim after being injured on his way to Chatsworth Metro Station.

BY TERRY CASTLEMAN

A man who was attacked on his way to the Chatsworth Metro Station by a machete-wielding assailant has filed a claim against the city of Los Angeles, saying unsafe conditions are to blame.

Brent Meldeau, 53, was walking to the station March 2 when, he said, he heard "someone approaching me, and I see this guy with his hand in the air. Then he hit me across the face with a machete."

"I was in shock," he said. "I dropped my phone. As I was running away, he asked me if I wanted some more." Meldeau said the blow nearly knocked him unconscious. The attack left him with a large cut across his face. The claim asks for monetary damages.

His attorney, Cyrus Shahriari, said in a statement that "lack of security and adequate lighting at the Chatsworth Metro Station not only puts public safety at risk but also undermines the community's sense of security and well-being."

"The city's negligent maintenance of the premises increased the likelihood that this type of criminal incident could occur," he said.

Shahriari also blamed "unmonitored homeless encampments located in darkened areas." He and his client claim the attacker was homeless.

Representatives for the Los Angeles City Attorney's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Safety issues have plagued Los Angeles' public transit systems, causing authorities to consider additional security. As illicit drug use and crime have gone up, ridership has struggled to recover from pre-pandemic levels.

Train boardings had fallen to less than two-thirds of pre-pandemic levels as of late February. Reports of serious crimes were up 24% in 2022 versus 2021, according to data presented to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority's executive board by the agency's top safety officer, Gina Osborn.

"I have a false sense of security because it's the town I grew up in, but it's not the same town," Meldeau said of Chatsworth.

"The crime is out of hand down in that area. I don't want anyone else to have to go through what happened to me."

Times staff writer Rachel Uranga contributed to this report.

'Frosty,' a rare white orca, is spotted with pod

BY SUMMER LIN

A rare white orca named "Frosty" was spotted over the weekend off Santa Monica Bay, drawing screams of excitement from whale watchers.

Harbor Breeze captain Kevin Nguyen said one of the whale-watching agency's boats was around six to seven miles from the Port of Los Angeles about 9:30 a.m. Sunday when those onboard saw a blow. Nguyen said they slowed the boat down and spotted big dorsal fins.

"We knew exactly what they were," he said.

Nguyen's boat followed the pod of about seven orcas, which included Frosty, a white orca with a rare skin condition. Nguyen said the last time they saw Frosty was in 2019, when the whale was a newborn.

Newport Coastal Adventure

THE WHITE ORCA swims alongside a pod of about seven whales in Santa Monica Bay on Sunday.

"It's been a while since we've seen orcas come around and it was nice to see them," he said.

The Newport Coastal Adventure team, which operates daily whale-watching tours, was tipped off to the orcas Sunday by Harbor Breeze, according to Newport Coastal Adventure captain Delaney Trowbridge.

The team took all its available boats, with 20 passengers onboard, and rushed to the orcas' last known location, about 45 miles from Newport Harbor.

"As the crew scanned for signs of the killer whales, they heard loud screams from the passengers — the whales had popped up only a quarter mile in front of our bow!" Trowbridge said in a statement. The team spotted the pod of orcas, which included Frosty.

The passengers spent the next 2½ hours watching as the whales traveled up the coastline. They last saw the whales about 61 miles from Newport Harbor, as the mammals continued north, probably in search of food.

The pod has been spotted as far north as British Columbia, Canada, and was last seen in October in Morro Bay.

Bill would end suspensions for 'defiance'

State students would no longer be excluded for nonviolent acts like ignoring teachers.

BY VANESSA ARREDONDO

Misha Karigaca was a middle school principal when Oakland Unified School District revamped its disciplinary policies in 2015 to end willful defiance suspensions.

Instead of sending a student out of class for a minor infraction, teachers were encouraged to de-escalate by talking to the child quietly or writing them a note in class.

"We're not just going to move the problem and kick the can down the road to somebody else," Karigaca said.

The discipline models could be replicated throughout California public schools under legislation sponsored by State Sen. Nancy Skinner (D-Berkeley). Senate Bill 274 would permanently extend the ban on willful defiance suspensions in middle and high schools after 2025. Current law bans these suspensions permanently for students in kindergarten through fifth grade.

When the earlier ban was put in place, some teachers said their classrooms became chaotic because students didn't see consequences for misbehavior. Now, even some educators who support the policy say they understand why teachers may worry that they do not have the resources to safely implement it at higher grade levels with older, and sometimes physically larger, students.

"If you're not taught basic tools to support and manage a classroom, then you are going to see behaviors escalate to a point where you might feel a little loss of control or safety in the environment that you're supposed to support," said Justine Bernacet, the lead seventh-grade teacher at KIPP Sol Academy, a charter middle school in East LA.

She supports the bill, but other educators are cautious.

The California Teachers Assn., one of the most influential interest groups at the state Capitol, withheld support for the bill unless it is amended. The union declined to say what changes it supports. A spokesperson for the state's other large teacher union, the California Federation of Teachers, also said it won't support the bill unless it's changed.

Skinner amended the bill on April 10 to specify that teachers could still remove disruptive and defiant students from the classroom. They would be placed in a separate room for the period with other children.

The single-class suspension could continue the following day, but the child wouldn't be prohibited from attending school entirely.

"Those kids who might be acting in such a way that causes a suspension are often the very kids that we really need to keep in school," Skinner said during a hearing last week.

Oakland is among a handful of school districts — including Los Angeles, Pasadena and San Francisco — that have already ended willful defiance suspensions, which punish students for nonviolent acts such as ignoring the teacher, wearing a hoodie in class, talking back to a teacher or disrupting the class by tapping their feet.

These disciplinary actions disproportionately affect Black, Latino and indigenous students, leading to higher dropout rates in these communities, according to a state report.

SB 274 would also prohibit the suspension and expulsion of students due to tardiness or truancy.

Educators could still suspend students for violence, drug possession or use, theft or bullying.

"Excluding students (for low-level offenses) gives the teacher a false sense of command of their class," said Renee Thomas, a middle school Spanish teacher at San Diego Unified, where these suspensions have already been banned.

"Instead of tearing down that relationship, we need to build them up so the student knows that we care and they understand that there is a place for them."

In 2014, the Pasadena Unified School District eliminated willful defiance and class disruption as reasons to suspend students. Julianne Reynoso, the district's assistant superintendent of student wellness and support services, said the district adopted a trauma-informed approach to address the root cause of student behaviors.

Under the new policy, suspension is a last resort, with a limit on days spent out of school, followed by a community reentry plan, she said.

RICH PEDRONCELLI AP

'Kids ... acting in such a way that causes a suspension are often the [ones] we need to keep in school.'

— SEN. NANCY SKINNER, (D-Berkeley)

Reynoso said suspension rates "declined significantly" in the last few years because of these efforts. Pasadena Unified in the 2021-22 school year had a 3.4% overall suspension rate with Black students suspended at an 8.4% rate.

Ten years earlier, the district's suspension rate was 8.8%, and Black students were suspended at a rate of 17.3%.

"Willful defiance had to come to an end in our district so that we could focus and center our efforts on other means to support our children," Reynoso said.

Oakland Unified's revamped discipline model also emphasizes alternative methods to removing students from school such as restorative practices, harm repair and counseling.

The school district's trajectory to that policy was the result of legal action. In 2012, four Black students filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights for racial harassment and discrimination.

The federal agency investigated the district and found that Black children were more frequently and harshly punished than other students.

"We've learned that suspending kids for defiance and disruption wasn't changing behaviors, it was just pushing the behavior away for a few days," Karigaca said.

Since the district banned willful defiance suspensions, Karigaca said his office gets a little over 100 expulsion referrals per year. Before that, it was about 500 each year, he said.

The Charter Schools Development Center was one of the only groups to oppose expanding the legislation in 2019. Eric Premack, the group's executive director, said that while it hasn't taken a position on SB 274 yet, it is uncertain that this bill will improve state academics.

"We are very much concerned about the academic achievement gaps for several student subgroups, especially African American students," Premack said in an email.

"Given the data, however, we're a bit skeptical that this legislation, however well-intended, will move the needle on closing achievement gaps."

Race to replace Newsom gets off to early start

[**Skelton,** from B1]
paigning for major office in this far-flung, multifarious state.

Yee said she won't officially enter the race until later in the year but wants to let everyone know she'll be running.

Kounalakis is California's first female lieutenant governor.

She enters the gubernatorial race with three substantial assets:

■ An impressive sounding title that includes the key word "governor" and implies a position more important than it really is.

■ A boatload of family money and access to a potent donor list that ensures she won't run short in a campaign that will probably cost more than $100 million.

■ Expert knowledge and experience in home building, qualities that the state government very much needs to tackle the curse of unaffordable housing in urban California.

The lieutenant governor title is a huge asset in a gubernatorial race. That said, only three sitting lieutenant governors have been elected California governor: Republican C.C. Young in 1926, Democrat Gray Davis in 1998 and Newsom in 2018. So there needs to be money, substance and some appeal behind the title.

"It was greatly helpful to Gray," recalls Garry South, Davis' former political strategist, referring to the lieutenant governor label.

"In focus groups, people couldn't think of one single thing he'd done as lieutenant governor because they didn't know," South says. "But they'd comment, 'He knows his way around because he's second in command,' or 'He's run the state when [Republican Gov. Pete] Wilson is out of state.'

"We're sitting there rubbing our bellies, thinking, 'This is great stuff.' "

Let's be honest, the virtually powerless job of lieutenant governor shouldn't even exist. It's totally unneeded. As a gubernatorial backup, we could tap another elected state official who holds a genuinely important office, such as attorney general.

We have this archaic law that says a lieutenant governor takes over for a governor when he's out of state. That harks back to the stagecoach or pokey train eras when a governor could be incommunicado for days or weeks. With Zoom and the smartphone, a governor these days can instantly act from anywhere in the world — just as a president can.

RICH PEDRONCELLI Associated Press

LT. GOV. Eleni Kounalakis has been relatively quiet since she was elected.

The lieutenant governor does sit on some important boards: the University of California Board of Regents, the California State University Board of Trustees and the State Lands Commission, for example.

And Newsom has designated Kounalakis as the state's International Affairs and Trade representative, using her foreign affairs experience as U.S. ambassador to Hungary during the Obama administration.

But, frankly, I thought we'd hear more from Kounalakis after she was elected, given her energy, tenacity and feisty nature. She has been relatively quiet.

In December, I described her as "the most obscure lieutenant governor I've ever seen."

By contrast, when Newsom was lieutenant governor, he was constantly promoting ideas, including his own economic growth plan for California. But that irritated Gov. Jerry Brown, who saw it as upstaging.

Brown pretty much shut out Newsom. Kounalakis wanted to get along with the governor.

"There's a different relationship between Gavin and Eleni," says Peter Ragone, a Kounalakis campaign strategist who worked for Newsom when he was San Francisco mayor. "They've known each other for decades. Their relationship is much more collaborative."

OK, but why hasn't Kounalakis weighed in on how to build more housing in California and make it affordable?

"She has been able to do it on the QT," Ragone says.

Fine, but we still haven't seen much progress on home-building.

Her father, Angelo Tsakopoulos, who as a teen migrated from Greece by himself virtually penniless to California, became a highly successful, very wealthy housing developer around Sacramento. Kounalakis became president of the huge family company.

I'd think that knowledge of affordable home-building would find a strong appeal among California voters.

But there could be a large field of candidates.

Other potential contenders besides Yee include Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta and U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Xavier Becerra.

Another long-shot possibility is San Francisco Mayor London Breed. Also, it's conceivable if either Rep. Adam B. Schiff of Burbank or Rep. Katie Porter of Irvine loses next year's U.S. Senate race, they might run for governor.

Whatever. The early odds are that the 41st California governor won't be another white male.

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Los Angeles Times

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice Requesting Proposal

Notice is hereby given that the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Education and Welfare Corporation (hereinafter referred to as **SFA**) is requesting proposals for a Food Service Management Company (hereinafter referred to as **Respondent[s]**) to assist with the SFA's food service management. Specifically, Preparation, delivery and service of Lunch and Breakfast Meals.

Respondents should not construe from this legal notice that the SFA intends to enter into a fixed–fee contract with the Respondent unless, in the opinion of the SFA, it is in the best interest of the SFA to do so. The SFA reserves the right to negotiate final contractual terms with the successful Respondent.

The Request for Proposal (RFP) documents may be obtained from the SFA at https://lacatholics.org/food-service/. To request the RFP documents by e-mail, U.S. mail, or fax, please contact Lilia S. Chavez, Director, Externally Funded Programs, at lschavez@la-archdiocese.org or (213) 637-7915. The SFA will record and provide answers to any questions or requests for clarifying information about the RFP during the question and answer period.

Respondents must submit written proposals in a sealed envelope labeled "Proposal - Food Service Management Company RFP #12324 and addressed to the SFA Office at School Food Service Office, 3424 Wilshire Blvd., Sixth Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90010-2202 Attn: Lilia S. Chavez. The SFA will accept all proposals received on or before Tuesday, May 30, 2023, at 10:00 am. Pacific Daylight Time. The SFA will not accept proposals that are received after the deadline. The SFA will open proposals at 10:00 am. Pacific Daylight Time on Tuesday, May 30, 2023.

The SFA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, and to waive any errors or corrections in a proposal or in the proposal process. The SFA will award the Contract based on a review and analysis of the proposals to determine which proposal best meets the needs of the SFA.

Published in the Los Angeles Times

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LEGAL NOTICES 1300

Legal Notices

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) LIFEGUARD VEHICLE SPONSORSHIP ALTERNATIVE FUEL SOLUTIONS

The Los Angeles County Fire Department (Fire Department) is releasing a Request for information (RFI) to obtain information from firms interested in entering into a Vehicle Sponsorship Agreement with the Fire Department.

To obtain the RFI documents, please contact Carlos Santiago by email at Carlos.Santiago@fire.lacounty.gov.

The submission deadline is May 15, 2023, by 5:00 p.m. (PST) to: Carlos.Santiago@fire.lacounty.gov

CN995424
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Los Angeles Times Classified — Los Angeles Times

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Legal Notices

LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY (LACMTA) REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

LACMTA will receive Proposals for **AE104903 - West Santa Ana Branch (WSAB) Transit Corridor Advanced Engineering** at the 9th Floor Receptionist Desk, Vendor/Contract Management Department, One Gateway Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

All Proposals must be submitted to LACMTA, and be filed at the reception desk, 9th floor, V/CM Department, on or before **2:00 p.m.** Pacific Time on **Tuesday, June 20, 2023**. Proposals received after the above date and time may be rejected and returned unopened. Each proposal must be sealed and marked **Proposal No. AE104903**.

For a copy of the Proposal/Bid specification visit our Solicitation Page on our Vendor Portal at http://business.metro.net/

Legal Notices

solicitations or for further information email Robert Romanowski at romanowskir@metro.net. 4/27/23

CNS-3694133#

Notice of Petition to Administer Estate of Patricia M. Anderson (23 STPB00042)

A hearing on the petition will be held at the Los Angeles Superior Court, Stanley Mosk Courthouse, 111 N. Hill St., Los Angeles, CA 90012 in Dept. 79, Room 610, on May 12, 2023, 8:30 AM. The petition requests that the decedent's will be admitted to probate and requests authority to administer the estate under the Independent Administration of Estates Act. Petitioners are Juliann Anderson and Eric J. Anderson. Attorney: Juliann Anderson, 17299 Regency Circle, Riverside, CA 92503, (951) 833-1328, Juliann.Anderson@gmail.com.

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SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)
Case Number (Numero del Caso): 19STCV46467

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:
(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):
DONOVAN HENRY, an individual; STATE FARM INSURANCE COMPANY, a corporation, and DOES 1-50, inclusive,

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:
(LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):
NOHO COMMONS PACIFIC OWNER, LLC, a Delaware limited liability company; and POLARIS PROPERTY SERVICES, LLC, a California limited liability company;

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of $10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 dias, la corte puede decider en su contra sin escuchar su version. Lea la informacion a continuacion.

Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO despues de que le entreguen esta citacion y papeles legales para presenter una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefonica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y mas informacion en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede mas cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentacion, pida al secretario de la corte que le de un formulario de exencion de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podra quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin mas advertencia.

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es):
Stanley Mosk Courthouse
111 North Hill Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
Michael W. Vivoli, Esq., Vivoli Saccuzzo, LLP
3104 4th Ave.
San Diego, CA 92103
619-744-9992

Date: (Fecha) 12-27-2019

Sherri R. Carter Clerk (Secretario)
Marita P. Barel Deputy (Adjunto)

SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)
Case Number (Numero del Caso): 30-2021-01204211-CU-FR-CJC

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:
(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):
LE INVESTMENT CONSULTING, LLC.; HOANG THOAI LE; Does 1 to 20

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:
(LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):
JEANS JEWELRY & COMPANY LLC

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of $10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

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The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es):
Orange County Superior Court
700 Civic Center Drive West
Santa Ana, CA 92701

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
Solution Law, APC
16580 Harbor Blvd., Suite K
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
714-839-9838

Date: (Fecha) 06/04/2021

David H. Yamasaki Clerk (Secretario)
Hailey McMaster Deputy (Adjunto)

SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)
Case Number (Numero del Caso): D-307-DM-2023-183

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT:
(AVISO AL DEMANDADO):
David Barrera

YOU ARE BEING SUED BY PLAINTIFF:
(LO ESTA DEMANDANDO EL DEMANDANTE):
Antonio & Rosa Reyes

NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of $10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 dias, la corte puede decider en su contra sin escuchar su version. Lea la informacion a continuacion.

Tiene 30 DIAS DE CALENDARIO despues de que le entreguen esta citacion y papeles legales para presenter una respuesta por escrito en esta corte y hacer que se entregue una copia al demandante. Una carta o una llamada telefonica no lo protegen. Su respuesta por escrito tiene que estar en formato legal correcto si desea que procesen su caso en la corte. Es posible que haya un formulario que usted pueda usar para su respuesta. Puede encontrar estos formularios de la corte y mas informacion en el Centro de Ayuda de las Cortes de California (www.sucorte.ca.gov), en la biblioteca de leyes de su condado o en la corte que le quede mas cerca. Si no puede pagar la cuota de presentacion, pida al secretario de la corte que le de un formulario de exencion de pago de cuotas. Si no presenta su respuesta a tiempo, puede perder el caso por incumplimiento y la corte le podra quitar su sueldo, dinero y bienes sin mas advertencia.

The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es):
3rd judicial district court
201 W. Picacho
Las Cruces , New Mexico 88005

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
Antonio & Rosa Reyes
306 W. Conway Avenue apt 1
Las Cruces , New Mexico 88005
575-937-8106

Date: (Fecha) February 21 2023

Noemi Ramirez Clerk (Secretario)
David S Borunda Deputy (Adjunto)

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JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

MRFEA

CEUNO

EWYTAS

DALIRA

Another great start to the day.
Nothing better than coffee, the Jumble and the sunrise.
4/27
THE SUN HAS BEEN RISING IN THE EAST EVERY MORNING SINCE THE ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Twitter @PlayJumble

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Ans. here: ( ) ( ) ( )

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: GECKO CANAL STRAND EXHALE
Answer: The Roosevelt dime replaced the Mercury dime after the Mint approved the — EXACT CHANGE

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IRFAN KHAN Los Angeles Times

THE NOB FIRE burns deep in the San Bernardino National Forest between Wrightwood and Lytle Creek on Wednesday. About 150 firefighters were battling it. The cause of the blaze is under investigation.

First large wildfire of the season

As many in the state worry about flooding, San Bernardino forest blaze burns 160 acres.

BY GRACE TOOHEY

A wildfire burning in the San Bernardino National Forest grew quickly past 100 acres Wednesday afternoon, fire officials said.

The Nob fire, the first large wildfire of the season in California, started shortly before 11 a.m. and had spread to about 160 acres by 2:30 p.m., according to the U.S. Forest Service. As of Wednesday evening, it was 0% contained.

Because of its location deep in the forest, between Wrightwood and Lytle Creek, the fire is not a threat to any surrounding communities, said Eric Sherwin, a spokesperson for the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

The blaze is the first major wildfire in California this year after an exceptionally wet winter that left state officials more concerned about flooding than fires — a reversal from recent years.

By this time in 2022 — the third year of a punishing drought — firefighters across the state had already battled more than a dozen major wildfires, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and federal fire data, which track incidents that burned at least 10 acres. The first major wildfire last year occurred in January, exceptionally early even as researchers say the state's fire season will continue to lengthen with climate change.

About 150 personnel from Cal Fire, the U.S. Forest Service and the San Bernardino County Fire Department were battling the blaze, said Gus Bahena, a spokesperson for the San Bernardino National Forest.

By about 2 p.m., the fire was spreading at a slow to moderate rate and burning west toward the snowpack, which should help calm the flames, Bahena said.

Although the Nob fire is the first of the year, Sherwin said, its timing was not atypical.

"This is pretty common for us in this part of the year," he said. "We will get big grass fires that run hundreds of acres ... and then they burn out.

"Fingers crossed, theoretically, that's what happens [today]," Sherwin said. He said at this time in the season, and particularly this year, the larger brush is still pretty saturated, which makes these early-season fires typically easier to manage.

The cause of the fire is under investigation, said Bahena, adding that reports that the fire grew out of a controlled burn were false.

The Rancho Cucamonga Fire District issued a smoke advisory Wednesday, explaining smoke seen in the city was likely from the Nob fire.

The wildfire broke out as a heat wave swept across the state, expected to bring some of the highest temperatures this year by the weekend. Sherwin said high temperatures could increase fire intensity but pointed out that the high levels of moisture in the ground — as well as the still-strong snowpack — will help balance concerns about the heat.

Cold front to follow brief heat wave

[**Heat wave,** from B1]
from getting out of control; the rivers are still going to overflow their banks."

Much of the Central Valley is expected to see temperatures in the upper 90s by Saturday, Spector said, which he called "unseasonably warm" but not extreme. Yet that warming has put many parts of the region on alert for an increased risk of flooding.

Portions of Kings, Tulare and Fresno counties along the Kings River are under an indefinite flood warning as water releases continue at Pine Flat Dam, with flooding expected in Sanger, Reedley, Laton and other flood-prone regions, according to the National Weather Service.

A flood advisory, one step below a warning, is in effect until further notice along the San Joaquin River in Fresno and Madera counties, with minor flooding expected in low-lying areas including Fresno, Mendota, Biola, Friant and Millerton Lake.

Much of the Eastern Sierra and the Yosemite Valley are under a flood watch, meaning the risk has increased but is not imminent, through Tuesday, with the Merced River expected to spill over at Pohono Bridge and other flooding in Yosemite National Park expected. Much of the park will be closed Friday through at least Wednesday due to flood concerns.

"The flooding will probably peak usually after the hottest temperatures, so probably Sunday or Monday," Spector said.

Temperatures hit the low 90s on Wednesday in places from Sacramento to Redding. The day also brought temperatures in the high 80s in inland areas of Southern California, with some areas reaching the low 90s.

Los Angeles County will see temperatures in the upper 70s on Thursday, with the valleys likely to be in the mid-80s, said David Sweet, a weather service meteorologist in Oxnard.

Highs will continue to increase into the 90s by Friday and Saturday, about 10 to 15 degrees above average for this time of year, he said.

On Wednesday, many inland areas in San Diego, Riverside and San Bernardino counties reached the mid- to high 80s, and some desert areas reached the 90s, according to the weather service office in San Diego.

By Saturday and Sunday, inland desert regions including Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley could see highs in the 100s.

High temperatures are also expected across Northern California, where forecasters warned of moderate heat risk, with highs into the 90s in parts of the inland San Francisco Bay Area through Friday.

The heat wave was brought on by a ridge of high pressure building over the state, which is expected to ease by the end of the week, Sweet said.

"The peak of it will be around Saturday with temperatures up near 90 degrees, then by Sunday, it starts cooling off again," Sweet said.

"It's a very brief and very moderate warming trend. Then it's going to be followed by a very extreme cooling trend."

After the cooler weather returns early next week, there is the potential for rare early May precipitation, forecasters said.

Weather officials remain optimistic that sustained cooler temperatures into May will help limit the flooding dangers from a big, fast melting of the snowpack, which could be triggered by a sustained heat wave.

"We'll be going from very warm at the end of this week to very cool and possibly wet for the next week," Sweet said.

A low-pressure system dropping down from Canada along the California coast will bring the drastic change in weather, he said.

By Tuesday, the L.A. area could see highs back down in the lower to mid-60s, he said, with a 20% chance of rain.

The chance of rain next week in the Central Valley is a possibility, Spector said, but "still questionable" this far out.

L.A. rapper found stabbed to death in prison

[**Rapper,** from B1]
torney, Nicholas Rosenberg. "He was a very popular guy, very mild-mannered. People loved him."

The rapper had been attacked in prison before Tuesday's incident, according to Rosenberg. Around midnight on Tuesday, officials called Rosenberg with word of his death.

"They said it was a stabbing to the neck," Rosenberg said. "They said they're investigating."

CDCR officials confirmed an investigation is underway by the prison's Investigative Services Unit and the Monterey County district attorney's office.

The Correctional Training Facility, where Valdez was housed, has more than 4,000 minimum- and medium-security inmates, according to the CDCR.

Another prisoner at the facility, who asked to remain anonymous for fear of retaliation, said the rest of the unit began hearing the news early Wednesday when officials locked down part of the prison and delayed serving breakfast.

The prisoner also said the killing happened in a part of the prison that houses general population inmates. He questioned why a popular rapper was not housed in a sensitive-needs yard, which is designed to protect those with specific safety concerns.

In the statement, CDCR officials said movement in the prison has been limited in order to facilitate the investigation.

Angela Diaz, a secretary with the coroner's division of the Monterey County Sheriff's Office, confirmed that Valdez died about 10:20 p.m. on Tuesday at the state prison.

Fans and other artists paid tribute to the Mexican American rapper on social media as word about his death began to spread Wednesday. On Suede's official Instagram profile, someone acknowledged the messages of condolences being sent out to the rapper's family were being received.

Fans and other artists had for weeks posted pictures of Suede, asking for him to be released from prison.

Valdez was serving a 32-month sentence for a pair of gun charges in Riverside County, according to Rosenberg. He was also facing a gun charge in Los Angeles County, though he had already pleaded and was expecting to receive a two-year sentence that would run concurrently with his Riverside convictions.

He surrendered in December, and was eventually sent to state prison in Soledad.

On Wednesday, the social media posts from fans and fellow artists were replaced by messages marking the rapper's death.

"LONGLIVESUEDE," posted Los Angeles rapper Peysoh on his Instagram account.

Suede began catching a buzz for his music soon after turning 18. In 2020, he turned heads with his song "Back to the Bag," reflecting on his personal traumas over chilled piano chords and a West Coast tempo.

"I didn't really know how to feel because I was in jail," Suede told Passion of the Weiss in 2021 of the song's video, which reached 1 million views while he was behind bars. "It's hard to focus on that ... and feel hopeful. You can't really force yourself to be happy. I didn't really feel it like that, you know?"

Suede signed to Atlantic Records in 2021, and released his most recent album "Parkside Baby" in September.

Obituaries

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Search obituary notice archives: legacy.com/obituaries/latimes

Marjory Lynn Madison

Marjory Lynn Madison, (87) born Margaret Leona Rimshas, of Los Angeles, CA passed away at the home she loved on Monday, April 17th, 2023, surrounded by her family.

She will be lovingly remembered by her brothers Anthony "Tony" Rimshas and Michael "Mickey" (Nancy) Rimshas both of IL, two nieces Shelly (Michael) Hart and Holly Kansiawala both of IL, one nephew Jesse (Karen) Rimshas of MI, six great nieces, two great nephews, and one great-great niece. She is also survived by dear friends and neighbors, including her childhood best friend Marie "Murmur" Albrecht who was like a sister to her.

She was preceded in death by her loving husband, Al Soroky, her parents Anthony "Duck" and Josephine Rimshas, and two beloved uncles, Peter "Pappy" Rimshas and Mike "Schlitz" Janushewski.

Marj was born July 3rd, 1935 to Josephine (Janushewski) Rimshas and Anthony "Duck" Rimshas in the small coal-mining town of Westville, IL. She attended St. Mary's Church and Elementary School in Westville, and graduated from Schlarman High School in Danville, IL. She earned a degree in Physical Education with a minor in Health Education and Zoology from Eastern Illinois University and returned to Danville, IL where she taught physical education for 2 years. She then moved to California where she worked as a teacher and advisor; eventually becoming the second youngest person to be named Head of the Physical Education Department of the Reseda, CA Cleveland High School. Marj later attended California Lutheran College, receiving a Master's Degree in Education. Over the course of her teaching career, she formed life-long friendships with coworkers.

Later, she went on to earn the title "Dr. Madison" after completing a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Clinical Psychology from the International College of California. She used her gifts of empathy and connection in her work as an individual, marriage, and family therapist. She was also a fierce advocate for equal professional opportunities for women.

Marj married the love of her life, Alfred Soroky, in 1994. They had over 20 years together in their Los Angeles home; spending hours outside surrounded by the beautifully landscaped yard and fountains. She was a lover of all creatures and rescued many animals over the years.

Throughout Marj's lifetime, some of her favorite loves were her family, spending time with friends, traveling, and writing letters. She enjoyed being active and walking her dogs. She was generous, loved people well, and had a way of making others feel valued. She had great admiration for her father Duck, Uncle Mike and Uncle Pappy, was a talented researcher of genealogy, and was proud of her Lithuanian heritage.

Per Marj's wishes, there will be no memorial service. Memorial donations can be made in Marj's name to the animal shelter of your choice or to St. Mary's Church 213 N. State street, Westville, IL 61883.

Carol M. Alpert

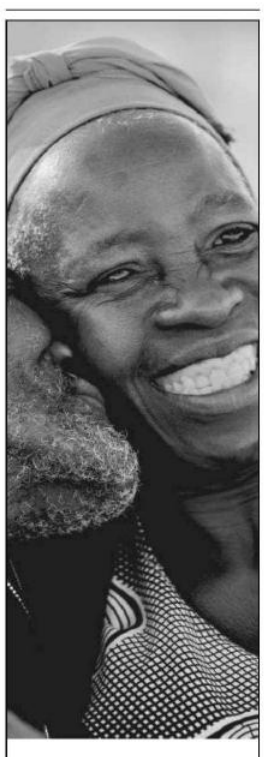
Mount Sinai Mem Parks
H. Hills 800-600-0076
mountsinaiparks.org

Matthew Davidson

Mount Sinai Mem Parks
H. Hills 800-600-0076
mountsinaiparks.org

GLORIA J. ZANOTTI

Gloria Zanotti was born Gloria Meaglia in Los Angeles on March 11, 1929. She grew up with her older brother Richard in the largely Italian enclave of Cypress Park, graduating from Franklin High School. She married Mario Zanotti in 1948, a short time after her father Sam, one of the founders of the American Foundry, passed away. She and Mario moved to a new home in San Gabriel in 1954 where she raised three children and also took care of her mother until her passing in 1993. She and Mario spent nearly 60 years together until his passing in 2008. She was a native Angelino that devoted herself to family, kept in close touch with extended family and devoted considerable time to the Societa' Bosconerese, a group centered mainly around immigrants from the small town of Bosconero in northern Piedmont, Italy. The club also supported an orphanage there. She is survived by her three children, Steve Zanotti, Craig Zanotti, and Marion Seletos, seven grandchildren, and seven great grandchildren. Ever gracious, always one to pitch in and help whenever needed, she will be missed by all who knew her. She was 94 at the time of passing. The picture is from her 90th birthday.



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Los Angeles Times

THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

Warm, especially inland: Marine air will keep temperatures from rising above average along the coast today, where the morning will start with clouds and fog. Sunshine will prevail inland as building high pressure allows sun and a warm afternoon. It will remain very warm inland Friday and Saturday as high pressure holds. A big cool-down is in store early next week as a storm drops down the coast.

5-day forecasts

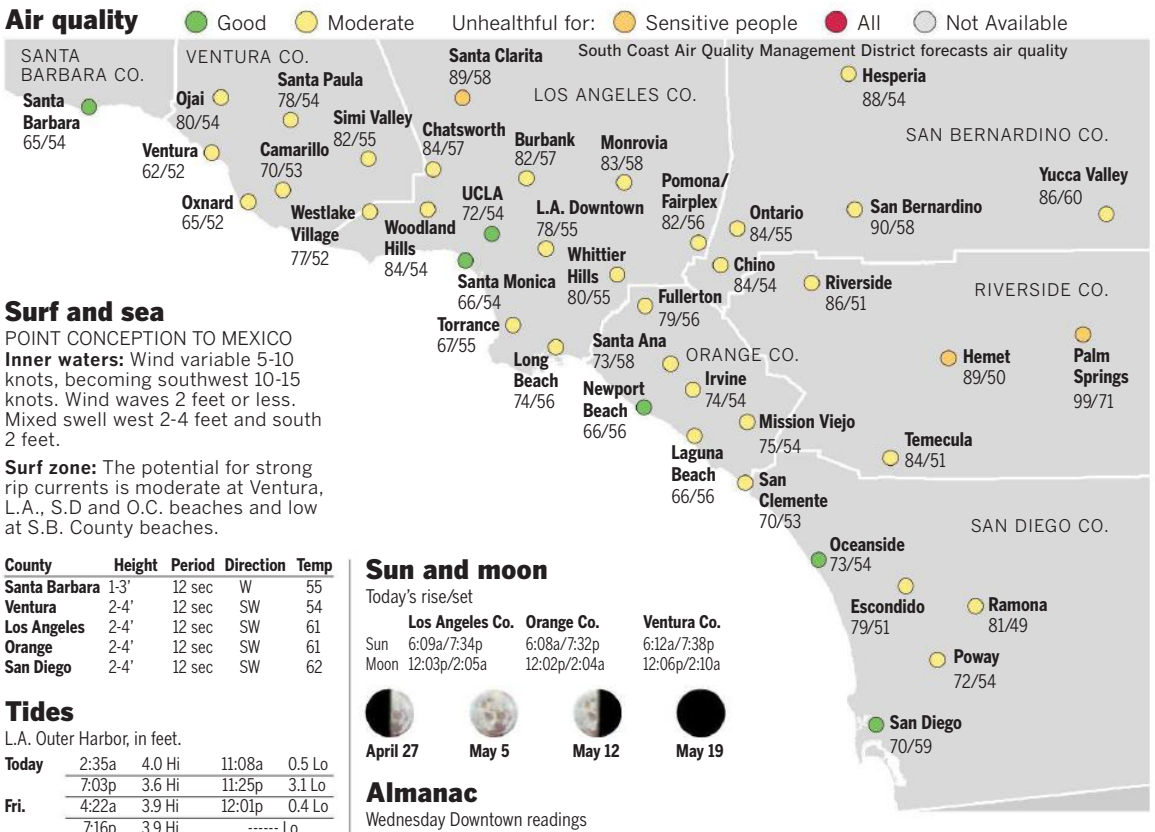
High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin		Valleys		Beaches		Mountains		Deserts	
Today	78|55		84|58		66|54		68|36		99|71	
	Partly sunny		Mostly sunny		Partly sunny		Mostly sunny		Hot with sunshine	
Friday	Partly sunny	78/57	Mostly sunny	86/61	Partly sunny	66/55	Mostly sunny	68/41	Very hot	104/73
Saturday	Mostly sunny	84/60	Very warm	90/63	Partly sunny	71/57	Mostly sunny	72/42	Very hot	103/75
Sunday	Partly sunny	80/59	Partly sunny	82/55	Partly sunny	68/57	Partly sunny	70/41	Hot	103/70
Monday	Cooler	66/54	Cooler	67/50	Clouds, sun	64/53	Cooler	59/32	Not as hot	93/61

Air quality

Good · Moderate · Unhealthful for: Sensitive people · All · Not Available

South Coast Air Quality Management District forecasts air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO

Inner waters: Wind variable 5-10 knots, becoming southwest 10-15 knots. Wind waves 2 feet or less. Mixed swell west 2-4 feet and south 2 feet.

Surf zone: The potential for strong rip currents is moderate at Ventura, L.A., S.D and O.C. beaches and low at S.B. County beaches.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	1-3'	12 sec	W	55
Ventura	2-4'	12 sec	SW	54
Los Angeles	2-4'	12 sec	SW	61
Orange	2-4'	12 sec	SW	61
San Diego	2-4'	12 sec	SW	62

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Today	2:35a	4.0 Hi	11:08a	0.5 Lo
	7:03p	3.6 Hi	11:25p	3.1 Lo
Fri.	4:22a	3.9 Hi	12:01p	0.4 Lo
	7:16p	3.9 Hi	------	Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people

Las Vegas, 25 · Phoenix, 25
Los Angeles, 25 · San Francisco, 25

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set

	Los Angeles Co.	Orange Co.	Ventura Co.
Sun	6:09a/7:34p	6:08a/7:32p	6:12a/7:38p
Moon	12:03p/2:05a	12:02p/2:04a	12:06p/2:10a

April 27 · May 5 · May 12 · May 19

Almanac

Wednesday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura
High/low	73/57	80/57	60/51
Normal high/low	73/56	75/55	68/49
High/low a year ago	81/59	81/58	68/51
Record high/date	99/2004	101/2004	85/1997
Record low/date	42/1894	49/2009	41/1961

Precipitation	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura
24-hour total (as of 5 p.m.)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Season total (since Oct. 1)	27.48	20.53	25.42
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	12.16	6.46	11.33
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	13.64	11.26	15.53
Humidity (high/low)	89/25	89/44	100/86

California cities

City	Wed. Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Friday Hi	Lo
Anaheim	83	57	--	78	54	81	55
Avalon/Catalina	73	51	--	71	57	70	59
Bakersfield	90	56	--	91	65	96	66
Barstow	86	53	--	93	64	95	63
Big Bear Lake	67	34	--	68	36	68	41
Bishop	82	40	--	85	48	89	49
Burbank	84	54	--	82	57	84	58
Camarillo	66	54	--	70	53	71	54
Chatsworth	xx	xx	xx	84	57	86	59
Chino	84	50	--	84	54	87	54
Compton	72	55	--	75	55	77	57
Dana Point	64	58	--	67	54	69	56
Death Valley	98	76	--	101	84	101	82
Del Mar	69	59	--	64	56	65	58
Escondido	79	58	--	79	51	81	53
Eureka	61	43	--	64	48	60	47
Fallbrook	77	57	--	77	50	79	53
Fresno	91	60	--	92	63	96	64
Fullerton	80	57	--	79	56	79	56
Hemet	88	48	--	89	50	90	52
Hesperia	xx	xx	xx	88	54	90	57
Huntington Beach	69	56	--	66	55	67	58
Idyllwild	74	45	--	74	55	80	60
Irvine	71	53	--	74	54	76	57

City	Wed. Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Friday Hi	Lo
L.A. D'ntown/USC	73	56	--	78	55	78	57
L.A. Int'l. Airport	65	56	--	68	55	69	57
Laguna Beach	70	57	--	66	56	70	58
Lancaster	87	46	--	91	58	95	58
Long Beach	75	57	--	74	56	74	56
Mammoth Lakes	62	29	--	69	37	72	43
Mission Viejo	82	55	--	75	54	77	56
Monrovia	82	51	--	83	58	86	60
Monterey	67	46	--	71	52	70	52
Mt. Wilson	73	58	--	58	54	61	55
Needles	91	66	--	98	68	100	69
Newport Beach	63	58	--	66	56	69	59
Northridge	91	51	--	85	54	87	57
Oakland	77	48	--	79	53	77	50
Oceanside	69	60	--	73	54	75	55
Ojai	83	48	--	80	54	81	58
Ontario	86	52	--	84	55	86	55
Palm Springs	97	63	--	99	71	104	73
Pasadena	84	53	--	81	57	84	58
Paso Robles	88	42	--	90	50	89	52
Redding	92	48	--	93	58	93	58
Riverside	85	48	--	86	51	88	51
Sacramento	88	48	--	92	55	92	55
San Bernardino	88	50	--	90	58	90	59

City	Wed. Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Friday Hi	Lo
San Diego	70	61	--	70	59	72	59
San Francisco	77	50	--	77	53	74	52
San Gabriel	xx	xx	xx	82	56	83	58
San Jose	83	51	--	86	58	85	55
San Luis Obispo	70	48	--	74	48	72	50
Santa Ana	71	59	--	73	58	75	60
Santa Barbara	60	53	--	65	54	67	56
Santa Clarita	86	50	--	89	58	90	61
Santa Monica Pier	65	55	--	66	54	66	55
Santa Paula	77	48	--	78	54	79	54
Santa Rosa	86	43	--	85	48	85	47
Simi Valley	79	48	--	82	55	83	54
Tahoe Valley	64	28	--	68	33	73	39
Temecula	86	51	--	84	51	87	51
Thousand Oaks	xx	xx	xx	77	53	77	54
Torrance	68	57	--	67	55	67	56
UCLA	66	52	--	72	54	74	57
Van Nuys	92	56	--	85	58	87	60
Ventura	60	51	--	62	52	62	54
Whittier Hills	83	56	--	80	55	80	57
Woodland Hills	90	48	--	84	54	84	58
Wrightwood	66	44	--	71	54	71	50
Yorba Linda	82	53	--	79	53	80	54
Yosemite Valley	75	46	--	81	49	84	48

Today in North America

Storm rolls across the South: Showers and thunderstorms will spread east across the South, with the highest threat for severe thunderstorms ahead of a front from Louisiana and Mississippi into Alabama and the Florida panhandle. Snow will fall across the northern Rockies.

U.S. cities

WEDNESDAY'S EXTREMES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 98 in Death Valley, Calif. **Low** 13 in Hartsel, Colo.

City	Wednesday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Albany	62	30	.11	61	39	Pc
Albuquerque	67	41	Tr	76	49	Su
Anchorage	46	31	--	49	34	Cy
Aspen	53	29	.30	53	29	Pc
Atlanta	62	56	Tr	68	61	Ts
Austin	84	65	.03	81	52	Pc
Baltimore	66	39	.01	69	54	Pc
Boise	72	40	--	73	44	Pc
Boston	52	47	Tr	53	45	Sh
Buffalo	51	35	.31	59	45	Su
Burlington, Vt.	61	34	Tr	59	37	Pc
Charleston, S.C.	80	58	.02	77	65	Pc
Charlotte	59	55	.28	66	60	Pc
Chicago	52	31	--	65	46	Pc
Cincinnati	63	42	--	67	54	R
Cleveland	51	41	Tr	60	49	Pc
Columbia, S.C.	74	59	.01	74	62	Pc
Columbus	59	39	--	67	51	Pc
Dallas/Ft.Worth	63	56	1.43	71	52	Pc
Denver	56	40	.19	67	33	Pc
Detroit	54	30	--	58	45	Pc
El Paso	81	54	--	84	62	Su
Eugene	75	42	--	77	46	Su
Fort Myers	89	68	--	89	72	Ts
Hartford	62	34	--	62	41	Pc
Honolulu	84	73	.02	82	72	R
Houston	81	65	Tr	80	57	Ts
Indianapolis	59	39	--	65	50	R
Jacksonville, Fla.	83	62	Tr	83	65	Ts
Kansas City	65	46	--	64	46	Cy
Knoxville	59	44	.13	66	55	R
Las Vegas	83	60	--	90	69	Su
Louisville	71	45	--	68	57	R
Medford	86	46	--	84	51	Su
Memphis	69	52	.06	68	56	R
Miami	88	72	.02	87	76	Ts
Milwaukee	46	34	--	60	43	Pc
Minneapolis	57	33	.02	63	50	Sh
Nashville	72	46	--	63	59	R
New Orleans	82	67	--	80	69	Ts
New York	60	46	.02	61	50	Pc
Norfolk	67	50	--	70	58	Sh
Oklahoma City	57	50	1.20	61	46	Pc
Omaha	68	42	--	71	50	Cy
Orlando	88	65	.14	88	68	Ts
Philadelphia	64	43	.35	66	50	Pc
Phoenix	90	64	--	96	68	Su
Pittsburgh	58	34	Tr	66	52	Pc
Portland, Ore.	77	48	--	76	52	Su
Providence	56	43	--	55	42	Cy
Raleigh/Durham	71	48	.09	68	58	Sh
Reno	76	42	--	80	48	Su
Richmond	70	40	--	73	55	Cy
St. Louis	65	44	--	63	51	R
Salt Lake City	65	39	--	70	41	Pc

City	Wednesday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Seattle	67	43	--	67	48	Su
Tampa	88	68	--	88	73	Ts
Tucson	86	58	--	91	60	Su
Tulsa	56	50	.44	60	45	Sh
Washington, D.C.	68	46	.01	71	54	Pc
Wichita	59	48	.12	63	46	Cy

World

City	Wednesday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Acapulco	87	75	--	87	72	Su
Amsterdam	50	36	.33	58	46	Pc
Athens	72	61	--	69	51	Pc
Bangkok	86	77	.30	97	81	Ts
Barcelona	66	57	--	70	58	Su
Berlin	51	36	--	53	35	Pc
Cabo San Lucas	82	64	--	83	64	Su
Cairo	88	68	--	91	63	Su
Dubai	91	81	--	90	74	Su
Dublin	54	41	--	53	45	R
Havana	90	67	--	91	72	Sh
Ho Chi Minh City	95	77	--	97	82	Cy
Hong Kong	77	67	--	78	72	Cy
Istanbul	63	55	.14	54	48	Ts
Jerusalem	73	46	--	76	56	Su
Johannesburg	76	55	--	77	57	Su
Kuala Lumpur	92	77	.39	93	78	Ts
Lima	79	71	--	79	70	Su
London	52	41	--	57	52	R
Madrid	86	52	--	89	55	Pc
Mecca	102	80	--	103	80	Su
Mexico City	83	56	--	83	54	Cy
Montreal	50	37	.14	58	38	Pc
Moscow	61	50	.11	66	49	R
Mumbai	91	81	--	91	80	Hz
New Delhi	95	73	--	97	72	Pc
Paris	57	41	.10	65	56	Cy
Prague	49	34	.07	54	36	Pc
Rome	70	45	--	69	49	Pc
Seoul	55	41	--	67	44	Su
Singapore	90	79	.12	89	78	Ts
Taipei City	68	64	.14	81	67	Sh
Tokyo	70	58	.34	71	61	W
Vancouver	57	46	.11	59	46	Su
Vienna	54	43	--	59	40	Pc

Key: Su sunny; **Pc** partly cloudy; **Cy** cloudy; **Fg** foggy; **Prcp** precipitation; **Dr** drizzle; **Hz** hazy **Sh** showers; **Ts** thunderstorms; **R** rain; **Sn** snow; **Sf** snow flurries; **I** ice; **Rs** rain/snow; **W** windy; **Tr** trace. **Notes:** National extremes exclude Alaska and Hawaii. Missing data indicated by "xx". Wednesday's readings as of 5 p.m.

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James and Lakers can't close out Grizzlies in Game 5 at Memphis

[**Lakers,** from B12]

Desmond Bane, the guy the Lakers couldn't stop in Game 4, stayed hot. Ja Morant, the guy the Lakers couldn't stop in Game 3, attacked and told them they were "too small."

And James, the player who saved the Lakers at the end of regulation and in overtime Monday, couldn't make a positive imprint in his first chance to close out the Grizzlies.

"Tonight," he said, "I was s—."

He couldn't stop it. The Lakers couldn't end it.

James left after making only five of 17 shots and one of nine from three-point range. He turned the ball over five times in 37 minutes and vowed he'd be better in Game 6.

Anthony Davis led the way with 31 points and 19 rebounds, a strong response after a quiet Game 4 but it wasn't nearly enough.

James had acknowledged after Monday's heroics that Game 5 would be the toughest in the series, the first crack at closing out the Grizzlies coming on Memphis' home floor. Bane hit his first shot, a mid-range jumper, to start the first quarter and fittingly ended it with a three, giving him 14 points in the quarter.

Bane, who had been quiet for most of the first three games, ran his defender, Austin Reaves, through bruising screen after bruising screen, Memphis' physicality getting its best perimeter scorer going.

"For us to relax would be asinine," Lakers coach Darvin Ham said before the game. "We have to come ready to play and ready to pour everything we have into this moment."

The Lakers didn't fold despite being down by 14 at the end of the first quarter and 17 deep into the second. Reaves hit a three, James got an easy basket and Davis scored on a three-point play to start the comeback.

D'Angelo Russell mirrored his performance from late in Game 4 early in the second half, scoring eight straight points out of halftime to make it a one-point game, but the Lakers never could grab the lead.

Open jumpers either missed badly or rimmed out, but the Lakers stayed close and again had the chance to take the lead with four minutes left in the third quarter.

Davis went to the bench for a quick breather, and after Reaves missed a floater, the Grizzlies scored on their next three possessions to begin the defining stretch of the game.

The Lakers scored only two more points over a nearly six-minute stretch in which Memphis push its lead from one to 25.

The Lakers, faced with shutting down their best players or trying for the miracle comeback, chose the latter. They got within 12 with four minutes to go, but by then, James was on the bench and the rest of the Lakers were gassed.

The top four players off the Lakers bench — Dennis Schroder, Rui Hachimura, Troy Brown Jr. and Malik Beasley — struggled. Hachimura finished with the best plus-minus rating: a minus-18.

The Lakers made only 10 of 39 from three-point range.

Bane had 33 points and Morant scored 31, each grabbing 10 rebounds.

After the loss, Ham said he'd use all options Friday to give the Lakers the best chance to end the series on their court.

"I'm willing to play 48 [minutes]," Davis said. "This is what you play an entire season for."

With the series heading to another crucial moment, Davis said he has confidence in the single biggest adjustment a team could have in its pocket.

"LeBron will play better," Davis said. "After Game 2 when I played like crap, I had my head down and he was telling me to keep my head up. And I kind of just relayed that same message to him tonight. 'You have the most points scored ever, you're the best basketball player to ever touch the court.'

"So, it's fine. He'll be fine. He'll adjust. He'll get better.

"Our team will get better and Friday is another opportunity to close the series."

BRANDON DILL Associated Press

JA MORANT of Memphis (31 points) shoots over Anthony Davis as Jaren Jackson Jr. rises to the rim.

Lakers will need James to bounce back again

[**Hernández,** from B12]

with 15 points. His five turnovers were the most in the game.

"Tonight, I was s—," James said.

The ageless wonder who powered the Lakers to an overtime victory in Game 4 of this Western Conference series looked every one of his 38 years in Game 5.

With James more resembling a bystander than protagonist, the Lakers' advantage over the No. 2-seeded Grizzlies was reduced to three games to two.

Late in the regular season, there were indications something like this could happen, as James attempted to play his way back into shape after sitting out four weeks because of a foot injury. Strenuous efforts were followed by games in which he was lethargic, leading to skepticism of whether his body could withstand round after round of physical postseason basketball.

Except looking ahead to a second-round series against the Golden State Warriors or Sacramento Kings suddenly feels premature.

The question James has to answer is more immediate, about whether he will be physically capable of leading the Lakers to a win Friday at Crypto.com Arena in Game 6. Lose there, and the Lakers will have to return to Memphis for Game 7.

"I'll be better in Game 6," James said.

Anthony Davis, who scored 31 points and collected 19 rebounds, echoed James' confidence.

"He'll get better," Davis said.

James acknowledged he didn't know how he would feel Friday.

"It's two days from now, so no idea," James said. "Obviously, I'll take care of my body and try to get as much sleep as I can and see how fast my body can recover to get ready for Friday."

The recovery process started on this night when the Lakers were behind by 14 points with 4 minutes 40 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter.

"He and I made eye contact and we had a nonverbal discussion," coach Darvin Ham said. "It was time. We're gonna need him big on Friday, so it was time."

James didn't have it from the start, the 47 minutes he played in his 22-point, 20-rebound game two night earlier clearly still affecting him.

"He's feeling it, man," Ham said on the eve of Game 5.

James scored the Lakers' first points on an alley-oop, but that turned out to be the only shot he made in the opening quarter, after which the Grizzlies were in front 38-24. The Grizzlies closed the period with a 15-4 run that coincided with time Davis spent on the bench.

James had just six points at the half.

His offensive troubles continued a perplexing trend of Davis playing well when James doesn't, and James playing well when Davis doesn't.

James dismissed the suggestion there was a reason for that.

"We just haven't put together two performances together," James said. "But we still have put three team efforts together to be up 3-2. That's what's important. It's not about what AD and myself are doing. It's about how we can win basketball games."

Well, the team's role players didn't play well either. Austin Reaves scored 17 points but made only four of 13 shots. Rui Hachimura sank half of his field goals but finished with only nine points.

The possible exception was D'Angelo Russell, who scored the first eight points of the second half to narrow the Lakers' deficit to 61-60.

James was responsible for the Lakers' final stand, as he followed Russell's run with one of his own. Scoring all nine of his team's points over a 2:13 span in the third quarter, he kept the deficit at one.

But James was finished and so were the Lakers.

James used to own games like this.

In the 50 closeout games James played before Wednesday night, his team won 39 times. No player in history who played in 25 or more such contests had won as great a percentage of them as James — not Michael Jordan, not Magic Johnson, not Tim Duncan.

Then again, he played only five of those closeout games with the Lakers, when they won the bubble championship.

That was three years ago.

James is now 38.

He has already conquered the calendar once in the series, in the pivotal moments of Game 4. For the Lakers to advance, he'll have to do so again.

BOX SCORES

GRIZZLIES 116, LAKERS 99

LAKERS

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
James	36	5-17	4-6	2-10	5	1	15
Vanderbilt	17	3-4	1-2	0-2	3	4	7
Davis	35	14-23	2-3	4-19	1	3	31
Reaves	40	4-13	6-6	2-8	6	4	17
Russell	30	4-11	1-2	2-4	10	1	11
Hachimura	21	4-8	0-0	0-2	0	3	9
Schroder	19	0-2	0-0	1-1	1	0	0
Brown Jr.	11	0-2	0-0	0-4	1	0	0
Beasley	11	2-6	0-0	1-1	0	0	6
Gabriel	8	1-3	1-1	2-2	0	1	3
Walker IV	4	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Christie	1	0-1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Harrison	1	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	0	0
Totals		**37-92**	**15-20**	**14-54**	**28**	**17**	**99**

Shooting: Field goals, 40.2%; free throws, 75.0%

Three-point goals: 10-39 (Reaves 3-8, Russell 2-5, Beasley 2-6, Davis 1-3, Hachimura 1-3, James 1-9, Christie 0-1, Schroder 0-1, Vanderbilt 0-1, Brown Jr. 0-2). Team Rebounds: 8. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 3 (Davis 2, James). Turnovers: 13 (James 5, Reaves 4, Beasley, Davis, Russell, Vanderbilt). Steals: 8 (Gabriel 2, Davis, Harrison, James, Reaves, Russell, Schroder). Technical Fouls: None.

MEMPHIS

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Brooks	29	3-15	0-0	0-2	0	4	8
Jackson Jr.	37	5-11	6-6	4-10	0	5	18
Tillman	31	4-10	0-1	3-6	4	1	8
Bane	42	12-21	5-6	1-10	5	1	33
Morant	37	13-26	3-4	2-10	7	2	31
Kennard	17	2-3	0-0	1-5	1	3	6
Jones	15	1-4	0-0	0-1	3	0	3
Aldama	13	3-5	0-0	2-5	3	1	7
Konchar	10	0-2	0-0	1-3	0	2	0
Lofton Jr.	1	1-2	0-0	0-0	0	0	2
Roddy	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Williams	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Totals		**44-99**	**14-17**	**14-52**	**24**	**19**	**116**

Shooting: Field goals, 44.4%; free throws, 82.4%

Three-point goals: 14-40 (Bane 4-9, Kennard 2-3, Jackson Jr. 2-5, Morant 2-5, Brooks 2-10, Aldama 1-2, Jones 1-4, Konchar 0-1, Tillman 0-1). Team Rebounds: 4. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 2 (Jackson Jr. 2). Turnovers: 11 (Bane 2, Jackson Jr. 2, Jones 2, Morant 2, Brooks, Tillman, Williams). Steals: 6 (Jones 2, Aldama, Jackson Jr., Kennard, Morant). Technical Fouls: None.

LAKERS	**24**	**28**	**24**	**23— 99**
Memphis	**38**	**23**	**33**	**22—116**

A—18,117. T—2:15.

Knicks 106, Cavaliers 95

NEW YORK

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Barrett	35	7-13	5-6	0-4	4	3	21
Randle	16	4-9	5-6	1-4	6	1	13
Robinson	36	6-9	1-4	11-18	1	4	13
Brunson	41	8-22	5-5	1-4	4	2	23
Hart	46	2-6	0-0	3-12	2	2	4
Quickley	29	5-15	6-6	0-2	1	3	19
Toppin	21	5-10	0-0	0-2	1	1	12
Hartenstein	11	0-1	1-2	1-2	2	1	1
McBride	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals		**37-85**	**23-29**	**17-48**	**21**	**17**	**106**

Shooting: Field goals, 43.5%; free throws, 79.3%

Three-point goals: 9-29 (Quickley 3-10, Barrett 2-4, Toppin 2-4, Brunson 2-6, Hart 0-2, Randle 0-3). Team Rebounds: 14. Team Turnovers: 4. Blocked Shots: 5 (Robinson 3, Hart, Hartenstein). Turnovers: 10 (Barrett 4, Brunson 2, Hart, Randle, Robinson, Toppin). Steals: 6 (Brunson 2, Robinson 2, Barrett, Toppin). Technical Fouls: None.

CLEVELAND

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
LeVert	37	6-13	1-2	1-5	4	3	17
Mobley	38	2-6	2-4	1-9	4	0	6
Allen	35	2-6	0-0	2-4	4	4	4
Garland	40	7-13	6-6	0-2	4	6	21
Mitchell	44	11-26	3-3	0-7	5	2	28
Okoro	19	4-5	0-0	0-1	2	3	10
Osman	14	2-5	0-0	0-1	1	2	6
Stevens	5	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	0	3
Green	4	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	2	0
Totals		**35-75**	**12-15**	**4-30**	**24**	**22**	**95**

Shooting: Field goals, 46.7%; free throws, 80.0%

Three-point goals: 13-33 (LeVert 4-7, Mitchell 3-12, Okoro 2-3, Osman 2-4, Stevens 1-1, Garland 1-6). Team Rebounds: 5. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 2 (Mitchell, Mobley). Turnovers: 13 (Garland 6, Mitchell 3, Mobley 3, Green). Steals: 5 (Mitchell 2, Okoro 2, LeVert). Technical Fouls: None.

New York	**33**	**28**	**26**	**19—106**
Cleveland	**26**	**25**	**24**	**20— 95**

A—19,432. T—2:25.

Heat 128, Bucks 126, OT

MIAMI

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Butler	46	17-33	5-9	1-8	4	2	42
Love	32	5-11	0-0	0-12	1	6	15
Adebayo	39	8-20	4-5	5-10	10	6	20
Strus	38	2-6	2-3	2-8	0	4	8
Vincent	41	9-23	0-0	0-0	6	4	22
Martin	20	1-2	0-0	0-3	1	0	2
Lowry	18	4-10	0-0	0-1	2	6	10
Robinson	15	1-2	0-0	0-1	1	1	3
Zeller	10	2-2	0-0	1-2	0	0	4
Highsmith	3	1-1	0-0	0-0	0	2	2
Totals		**50-110**	**11-17**	**9-45**	**25**	**31**	**128**

Shooting: Field goals, 45.5%; free throws, 64.7%

Three-point goals: 17-45 (Love 5-11, Vincent 4-12, Butler 3-10, Lowry 2-4, Strus 2-4, Robinson 1-2, Adebayo 0-1, Martin 0-1). Team Rebounds: 11. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 5 (Strus 2, Adebayo, Butler, Love). Turnovers: 11 (Butler 5, Adebayo 3, Lowry, Robinson, Vincent). Steals: 6 (Adebayo 2, Butler 2, Highsmith 2). Technical Fouls: Haslem, 6:00 second.

MILWAUKEE

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
G.Anttknmpo	42	14-27	10-23	4-20	3	4	38
Middleton	41	10-24	9-9	1-6	6	5	33
Lopez	43	7-11	1-3	3-10	1	3	18
Allen	26	2-7	2-2	0-4	3	3	8
Holiday	46	4-11	6-8	0-9	6	1	16
Matthews	23	2-5	0-0	0-0	0	1	6
Portis	16	0-2	0-0	1-4	0	0	0
Connaughton	16	3-3	0-0	1-3	0	4	7
Ingles	7	0-1	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Crowder	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals		**42-91**	**28-45**	**10-56**	**20**	**21**	**126**

Shooting: Field goals, 46.2%; free throws, 62.2%

Three-point goals: 14-33 (Middleton 4-10, Lopez 3-5, Matthews 2-3, Allen 2-5, Holiday 2-6, Connaughton 1-1, Portis 0-1, G.Antetokounmpo 0-2). Team Rebounds: 20. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 1 (Lopez). Turnovers: 15 (G.Antetokounmpo 7, Middleton 3, Holiday 2, Lopez 2, Ingles). Steals: 4 (Connaughton, Holiday, Lopez, Matthews). Technical Fouls: Allen, 7:56 third.

Miami	**36**	**27**	**23**	**32**	**10—128**
Milwaukee	**33**	**36**	**33**	**16**	**8—126**

A—18,113. T—NA.

Warriors 123, Kings 116

GOLDEN STATE

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Thompson	32	10-19	0-0	0-2	1	5	25
Wiggins	38	9-16	0-0	0-4	0	5	20
Looney	34	2-4	0-0	7-22	7	4	4
Curry	41	12-25	5-6	0-2	8	2	31
Poole	23	4-12	1-3	0-3	6	1	10
D.Green	31	8-10	4-8	0-4	7	4	21
DiVincenzo	17	1-5	0-0	0-0	3	2	2
Payton II	15	4-5	0-0	4-6	0	1	8
Moody	4	0-0	2-2	0-0	1	0	2
Totals		**50-96**	**12-19**	**11-43**	**33**	**24**	**123**

Shooting: Field goals, 52.1%; free throws, 63.2%

Three-point goals: 11-38 (Thompson 5-11, Wiggins 2-5, Curry 2-10, D.Green 1-2, Poole 1-6, Payton II 0-1, DiVincenzo 0-3). Team Rebounds: 8. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 7 (Wiggins 2, D.Green, DiVincenzo, Looney, Moody, Poole). Turnovers: 14 (Curry 5, Thompson 4, D.Green 3, Looney, Wiggins). Steals: 11 (D.Green 4, Payton II 2, Poole 2, Wiggins 2, DiVincenzo). Technical Fouls: None.

SACRAMENTO

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Barnes	33	3-6	7-7	1-3	1	1	13
Murray	34	4-5	0-0	0-6	0	1	10
Sabonis	36	9-15	3-4	5-10	4	5	21
Fox	41	9-25	3-3	2-7	9	3	24
Huerter	16	4-10	0-0	0-4	2	2	9
Monk	29	6-14	8-10	1-5	3	3	21
Mitchell	24	4-10	0-0	1-1	1	1	10
Lyles	13	2-4	0-0	1-5	1	1	5
Len	11	1-1	1-2	1-3	1	1	3
Edwards	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals		**42-90**	**22-26**	**12-44**	**22**	**18**	**116**

Shooting: Field goals, 46.7%; free throws, 84.6%

Three-point goals: 10-34 (Fox 3-10, Murray 2-2, Mitchell 2-8, Lyles 1-2, Huerter 1-4, Monk 1-5, Sabonis 0-1, Barnes 0-2). Team Rebounds: 10. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 3 (Barnes, Fox, Sabonis). Turnovers: 19 (Fox 6, Sabonis 5, Monk 3, Barnes 2, Mitchell 2, Len). Steals: 9 (Sabonis 3, Barnes 2, Fox 2, Monk 2). Technical Fouls: Fox, 8:41 third.

Golden State	**33**	**27**	**39**	**24—123**
Sacramento	**36**	**20**	**34**	**26—116**

A—18,253. T—NA.

Season's end brings questions

Clippers face decisions on George, Leonard, Westbrook as well as Lue

By Andrew Greif

After a first-round playoff loss to Phoenix, the Clippers arrived at their offseason Tuesday night.

Here are the questions that will define it:

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Everything trickles down from one, central question: How much confidence do the Clippers have in continuing to build their championship aspirations around star wings Kawhi Leonard and Paul George? When salary and luxury tax payments are combined, team owner Steve Ballmer paid about $350 million for a first-round exit, according to a person with knowledge of the team's financials. That number will rise to about $375 million next season — and that doesn't account for a starting point guard and backup center, with Russell Westbrook and Mason Plumlee unrestricted free agents.

Ballmer's appetite to continue paying that much is likely tied into his evaluation of the current team's potential — but injuries have kept that potential from being seen.

"They're in a really tricky situation," a rival executive said.

In four seasons together Leonard and George have played 142 games, with a record of 96-46. It's proof they can win at a high rate when on the floor, and their individual play this season returned to all-NBA production — but how dependable they are to actually play together is a question on which hinges hundreds of millions of dollars.

Contract extensions can be offered to Leonard starting July 12 and to George starting Sept. 1, according to a person with knowledge of their extension dates. Current estimates peg the cost of those extensions at $220 million over a maximum of four years. Will such extensions be offered pro forma, or will the uncertainty surrounding their dependability lead the team to hesitate and let their current contracts play out?

Leonard and George are on essentially expiring contracts, with both able to enter free agency in 2024 if they decline player options. If the Clippers decide a different core gives them a better shot at extending their championship window — and there has been no indication yet that is their stance — the clock would begin ticking on whether they would try to trade either.

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Will Leonard's knee injury lead him to miss part of the 2023-24 season? Leonard tore meniscus in his right knee, confirmed a person with knowledge of the injury who was not authorized to discuss it publicly. Leonard and the team are taking time to decide whether to pursue surgery or nonsurgical options, with a decision not expected soon. News of the injury hit Leonard "real hard," George said.

Most "garden-variety" meniscus tears lead to surgery, and many surgeries lead to the full removal of the meniscus, which usually carry a recovery time of three to six weeks, said Dr. T.O. Souryal, a former president of the NBA's association of team doctors, who was Dallas' team doctor for 22 years.

Surgery that repairs but does not remove the meniscus carries a longer recovery, from three to four months. "Assuming that is all it is, a meniscus injury, then whether it's excised or repaired does not preclude him from coming back next season in time," he said.

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The Clippers always are active in search of roster upgrades, but how far can they realistically go with their retooling? They're miles over the salary cap with 10 players on guaranteed contracts next season, so their options are limited in free agency to bring back a player such as Westbrook. George called Westbrook the point guard the team needs going forward. Coach Tyronn Lue wants him back too. Yet Westbrook's promising play since signing in February could lead to more lucrative offers than the exception the team has available to offer, which is expected to be worth around $4 million.

They could be left to seek upgrades around the margins because taking a big swing at another impact player will be difficult. They still are bereft of draft picks to dangle in front of other teams, and the value of their players is in the eye of the beholder. The team signed numerous players to contracts worth between $10 million and $20 million annually in recent seasons, believing that, at worst, the players could be enticing trade ballast.

But interest from other teams in the players, outside of wing Terance Mann, is said to be cool. Along with point guard and backup center, addressing their power forward position is key after Marcus Morris Sr., Nicolas Batum and Robert Covington either received spotty playing time or produced inconsistently. All are on expiring contracts.

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What does the future hold for Lue? Asked directly Tuesday whether he expected to coach the Clippers next season, Lue answered, "Yes, sir." Lue also said he and his staff would take a break then "come back and just try to be better than we were this year."

The direct answer came after he began his postgame news conference with an emotional introduction in which he thanked members of the organization for his three-year run. It also followed a season in which Lue frequently was frustrated by the unpredictability of knowing which players would be available to play and how often, and the communication with the front office on that topic.

"I'm proud of every guy in the locker room, scrap and compete every night," Lue said. "That is all you can ask for when you are shorthanded. You take the two best players off of anybody's team, they're not going to win."

At times during the season, when multiple players were on minutes limits, Lue was asked to coach off an index card that outlined preferred rotation patterns. Asked in March whether medical advancements had allowed some players to get better with age, Lue referenced load management.

"It's two words, I don't want to hear it," he said.

The story of the Clippers in 2022-23 was that they rarely got a chance to see it, their full potential. Their answers this summer could decide what that potential looks like.

Matt York Associated Press

RUSSELL WESTBROOK, center, is a free agent and Kawhi Leonard, right, has torn meniscus in his knee.

PLAYOFF SCHEDULE
FIRST ROUND

WESTERN CONFERENCE

1 Denver vs. 8 Minnesota
Nuggets win series 4-1

Gm 1	Denver 109, Minnesota 80
Gm 2	Denver 122, Minnesota 113
Gm 3	Denver 120, Minnesota 111
Gm 4	Minn. 114, Denver 108 (OT)
Gm 5	Denver 112, Minnesota 109

2 Memphis vs. 7 LAKERS
Lakers lead series 3-2

Gm 1	LAKERS 128, Memphis 112
Gm 2	Memphis 103, LAKERS 93
Gm 3	LAKERS 111, Memphis 101
Gm 4	LAKERS 117, Mem. 111 (OT)
Gm 5	Memphis 116, LAKERS 99
Gm 6	Friday at LAKERS, 7:30
Gm 7	Sunday at Memphis, TBD*

3 Sacramento vs. 6 Golden State
Warriors lead series 3-2

Gm 1	Sacramento 126, G.S. 123
Gm 2	Sacramento 114, G.S. 106
Gm 3	G.S. 114, Sacramento 97
Gm 4	G.S. 126, Sacramento 125
Gm 5	G.S. 123, Sacramento 116
Gm 6	Friday at Golden State, 5
Gm 7	Sunday at Sac., TBD*

4 Phoenix vs. 5 CLIPPERS
Suns win series 4-1

Gm 1	CLIPPERS 115, Phoenix 110
Gm 2	Pho. 123, CLIPPERS 109
Gm 3	Phoenix 129, CLIPPERS 124
Gm 4	Pho. 112, CLIPPERS 100
Gm 5	Pho. 136, CLIPPERS 130

EASTERN CONFERENCE

1 Milwaukee vs. 8 Miami
Heat win series 4-1

Gm 1	Miami 130, Milwaukee 117
Gm 2	Milwaukee 138, Miami 122
Gm 3	Miami 121, Milwaukee 99
Gm 4	Miami 119 Milwaukee 114
Gm 5	Miami 128, Mil. 126 (OT)

2 Boston vs. 7 Atlanta
Celtics lead series 3-2

Gm 1	Boston 112, Atlanta 99
Gm 2	Boston 119, Atlanta 106
Gm 3	Atlanta 130, Boston 122
Gm 4	Boston 129, Atlanta 121
Gm 5	Atlanta 119, Boston 117
Gm 6	Tonight at Atlanta, 5:30
Gm 7	Saturday at Boston, 4:30*

3 Philadelphia vs. 6 Brooklyn
76ers win series 4-0

Gm 1	Phila. 121, Brooklyn 101
Gm 2	Phila. 96, Brooklyn 84
Gm 3	Phila. 102, Brooklyn 97
Gm 4	Phila. 96, Brooklyn 88

4 Cleveland vs. 5 New York
Knicks win series 4-1

Gm 1	New York 101, Cleveland 97
Gm 2	Cleveland 107, New York 90
Gm 3	New York 99, Cleveland 79
Gm 4	New York 102, Cleveland 93
Gm 5	New York 106, Cleveland 95

* if necessary
All times PDT, unless noted

NBA ROUNDUP

Bucks collapse, ousted by Heat

Associated Press

Jimmy Butler scored 42 points and sent the game to overtime on a stunning alley-oop as the Miami Heat staged a second straight fourth-quarter rally before winning 128-126 on Wednesday night in Game 5 at Milwaukee to complete a first-round upset of the top-seeded Bucks.

Two nights after outscoring the Bucks 30-13 in the final six minutes of a 119-115 victory in Miami, the Heat produced another huge comeback, erasing a 16-point deficit, and tied the game on Butler's off-balance shot with half a second left in regulation.

Bam Adebayo put the Heat ahead for good by dunking in a putback of Butler's missed layup with 4:44 left in overtime. The Bucks trailed 128-126 and had the ball in the closing seconds, but the clock ran out before Grayson Allen could take a shot as he drove to the basket.

Adebayo had 20 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists. Gabe Vincent added 22 points.

The Heat will play a second-round series with the fifth-seeded Knicks. Game 1 is Sunday in New York.

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 38 points and 20 rebounds for the Bucks, though he shot just 10 for 23 on free throws. Khris Middleton added 33 points.

New York 106, Cleveland 95: Jalen Brunson scored 23 points, RJ Barrett added 21 and the Knicks showed toughness and depth while finishing off the Cavaliers in Game 5 to advance to the second round for the first time since 2013.

The Knicks easily controlled a series that was more one-sided than expected, even after forward Julius Randle aggravated his left ankle injury and missed the second half. Obi Toppin started in his place and scored 12 points in the third quarter as the Knicks opened an 18-point lead.

Brunson averaged 24 points in the series.

Golden State 123, Sacramento 116: Stephen Curry scored 31 points and Klay Thompson added 25 as the Warriors won their third in a row to take a 3-2 series lead over the Kings. Sacramento star De'Arron Fox, playing with a broken finger, had 24 points on 25 shots.

Clippers must trade Leonard, George or both

[**Plaschke,** from B12]

that time was basically meaningless because, once again, they couldn't do it together when it counted.

For four straight years they haven't done it together when it counted. When is owner Steve Ballmer going to say enough is enough? He wasn't afraid to pull the plug on Doc Rivers and Lob City. What is stopping him now? This latest debacle should be the final straw.

On March 21, George sprained his knee and disappeared. On April 20, after two games of the Phoenix series, it was announced Leonard sprained his knee and he also disappeared. It was later revealed that Leonard tore meniscus, quieting critics who ripped him for not playing hurt, but his absence nonetheless finished the Clippers' season.

Anybody who watched the Phoenix series could see that with Leonard, who is arguably the league's best active playoff player when healthy, the Clippers would have won that series. The new-look Suns still are trying to figure out things with their lack of depth and defense, and the Clippers could have taken full advantage.

If the Clippers had beaten the Suns, there appeared to be a decent chance George would have returned for the next round, and with those two in the lineup? Crazy as it sounds, they could have won the championship.

They're that deep. They're that versatile. They're coached that well. They have everything.

Yet, without full use of Leonard and George, they have nothing.

Since both arrived in that giddy summer of 2019, those two essentially have done nothing.

Ballmer is a terrific owner, one of the best in sports. He has given his organization everything to succeed. The Clippers are the second-highest-paid team in the sport. Their intense in-game production is the most fun in town. That new joint in Inglewood is supposed to be spectacular.

After years of ridicule, the Clippers are one of those few organizations that seemingly does everything right.

That's why they cannot let the presence of George and Leonard keep doing them wrong.

They cannot afford to have two players who require load management show up injured when they're finally needed for every game.

They cannot pay nearly $100 million annually to players who simply aren't healthy enough to provide a sizable return on the investment.

Wouldn't you rather see a Clippers team led by hard-charging younger players who show up and show out and let Lue guide them to greatness?

Don't you identify with Norman Powell and Terance Mann and Ivica Zubac?

Wouldn't you cheer for a superstar like them instead of one who spends his time in street clothes?

Russell Westbrook defied critics like this one and was a brilliant late-season addition, but they probably can't afford to re-sign him. To enhance the culture, the Clippers have to do it via trade, and they have the goods to make it happen.

Start with Leonard. He'll be only 32 in June but already he might be too physically broken down to be great again.

He doesn't consistently play. He doesn't lead. He rarely talks. He is the anti-Ballmer, and it is so strange that the franchise continues to bend over backward to accommodate a player who is neither their face nor their voice nor anything other than an occasional rush of adrenaline.

After the season ended Tuesday night, Leonard did not meet with reporters. Since he was injured last week, he has not met with reporters. Because the Clippers don't do team-wide interviews like their hallway rival Lakers, there are no announced plans for him to meet with reporters.

It is understandable that Leonard would not want to talk while the Clippers still were engaged in the series. But now that the season is over, doesn't he owe the fans an explanation of what happened ... especially since there were no obvious signs of when he actually suffered the injury?

In terms of fan engagement, Leonard is a fat zero. In terms of on-court consistent impact, he hasn't been much better.

In 2020, he was one of the biggest complainers on a bubble team that blew a three-games-to-one lead to Denver and cost Los Angeles a monumental playoff series between the two hometown teams. He didn't want to be in Orlando. His irritation led to a locker room disintegration.

In 2021 he tore up his knee in the postseason and, through no fault of his, once again cost the Clippers a legitimate shot at the title.

In 2021-22, he sat out the entire season, but fans were certain he would be ready for this season. He wasn't. He played great in the three months after January and was dominant in the first two games against Phoenix and then — poof! — he was gone.

George really hasn't been around much more. Of the 307 regular-season games during his four years in L.A., George has sat out 118. His absences seem mitigated by his willingness to serve as the accessible and amiable face of the team, but he still is not spending enough time on the court, and the team is suffering because of it.

George spoke to reporters this week in his own version of an exit interview and was adamant that he and Leonard, who came here as basically a package deal, should be allowed to stay together.

"We just had a short window," he said. "We've seen when we're at our best with everybody healthy and what we're capable of. We just, you know, again — small window of not being able to ... put it all together at the same time for a long period.

"But I think it's enough to go forward and be very optimistic of what we can be in years to come."

It has, indeed, been a small window. But now that window has closed.

In case of emergency, break glass.

GENE J. PUSKAR Associated Press

THE PIRATES' Tucupita Marcano, left, is blocked at the plate by Dodgers catcher Austin Wynns while attempting to score. The run was allowed when it was ruled on review that Wynn had illegally blocked the plate.

Gonsolin makes his return but Dodgers not themselves

With three starters out and most veterans mired in slumps, they are routed by Pirates.

PITTSBURGH 8
DODGERS 1

BY JACK HARRIS

PITTSBURGH — For the second straight night, the short-handed Dodgers started a lineup with Jason Heyward batting third, rookies in the Nos. 4-6 spots and three sub-.200 hitters rounding out the batting order.

It didn't look good on paper. And in an 8-1 loss to the Pittsburgh Pirates, it produced even worse actual results.

After surprisingly scoring eight runs in a series-opening win on Tuesday, the Dodgers managed just four hits in their blowout defeat Wednesday at PNC Park — feeling the continued absences of Will Smith (concussion), Max Muncy (paternity list) and J.D. Martinez (back tightness) acutely as their three-game winning streak ended.

"Unfortunately, yeah, we do have some guys in and out," Heyward said. "But that's part of the game. People get hurt, people go down. ... We just keep going, keep battling."

The Dodgers (13-12) were held hitless through five innings by Pirates starter Roansy Contreras.

They left runners on the corners in the sixth, when Heyward and James Outman — who once again served as the cleanup hitter — flied out to retire the side.

JOE SARGENT Getty Images

THE DODGERS' Chris Taylor turns a double play in front of the Pirates' Ke'Bryan Hayes in the third. The short-handed Dodgers lost to Pittsburgh 8-1.

And by the time Freddie Freeman lifted a solo home run in the eighth, it was far too late, with the speedy, small-ball, first-place Pirates (17-8) having already opened an eight-run lead.

"I don't want to belabor it," manager Dave Roberts said of his lineup's notable absences. "We still got good players and they got to perform."

The Dodgers are hoping to get reinforcements soon.

Muncy is scheduled to be back Friday.

Smith, who took live batting practice and caught bullpen sessions Wednesday, could return as soon as Saturday.

And Martinez isn't expected to go on the injured list, Roberts said, despite missing his second straight game.

In the meantime, however, the rest of the Dodgers roster has been doing itself few favors.

Despite his home run, Freeman has just a .839 OPS and nine RBIs in the opening month. Fellow former MVP Mookie Betts has been quieter, batting just .241 with three home runs.

The Dodgers veteran depth hasn't shown up either, with Heyward, Trayce Thompson, David Peralta and Chris Taylor mired in extended slumps.

And on the other side of the ball, the Dodgers inconsistent pitching staff — which got 3⅓ scoreless innings from Tony Gonsolin in his workload-restricted season debut, but more poor performance from struggling relievers Yency Almonte and Alex Vesia — was tormented again by the opposition's running game, giving up six more stolen bases Wednesday to raise their season total to an MLB-most 35.

"Right now I don't know the answer," Roberts said. "The best answer is to try to keep them off first base, but once they get there, they're taking advantage of us."

Angels clobber lowly Oakland with their bats

A dozen hits, coupled with Sandoval's pitching, help team move over .500.

ANGELS 11
OAKLAND 3

BY SARAH VALENZUELA

Brandon Drury has been emerging from his slump. Over the last three games against the Oakland Athletics, he's racked up seven hits in 13 at-bats, including five extra-base hits. In the Angels' 11-3 win over the A's on Wednesday, he hit a double and his fourth home run of the season, contributing three RBIs and helping the Angels move over .500.

Drury has attributed his gradually improved at-bats to better swings, improved timing and getting back the feeling of what had made him successful at the plate in the past.

"It's all feel for me," Drury said. "When I'm in there thinking about what I'm supposed to be doing, I'm really bad, as you saw the first three weeks. About as bad as it gets.

"When I'm just kind of in there trusting myself being the dangerous hitter that I am, it's a lot better sometimes."

Before Sunday, Drury had been hitting .179 with a .477 on-base-plus-slugging rate.

That day also started with Drury collecting his first Silver Slugger award for his offense last season.

While collecting that award, manager Phil Nevin said Drury made a wisecrack about himself, that he was not sure whether he deserved the award.

"He earned that award and we feel like his numbers are gonna get rightwhere they were last year here and really soon," Nevin said. "I love the way he's swinging the bat right now, driving it [with] authority, going out there with a purpose. It's good to see."

Drury was one of five Angels who logged RBIs and one of the three who hit home runs in the win. Hunter Renfroe, Drury and Shohei Ohtani put the exclamation points on the Angels offense in the third, fifth and eighth innings with a solo home run and two two-run blasts, respsectively.

"Definitely feels good to go play some good baseball and help the team win a game for sure," Drury said.

Though those runs merely extended the Angels' existing lead — starter Patrick Sandoval and the Angels defense shut the A's out through the final four innings — they helped get back the two earned runs Sandoval was charged with, one of which came on a solo home run he gave up to Kevin Smith to start the third inning.

Sandoval hit one batter and struck out five over seven innings and threw 105 pitches, his most this season.

He lasted seven innings, giving up three runs on six hits.

Sandoval described the run support the Angels offense provided as awesome.

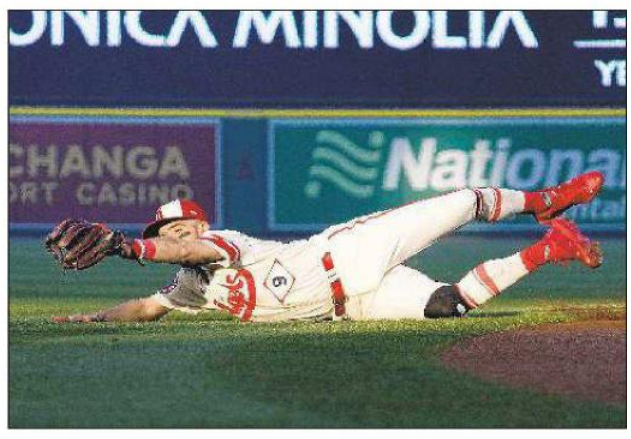
"We raked," he said. "One through nine, we are nasty. So it's gonna be fun. The guys are getting hot."

One step closer

Rookie catcher Logan O'Hoppe had surgery to repair the torn labrum in his left shoulder Tuesday.

Back in the Angels clubhouse to watch the game Wednesday, he said he started feeling better a few hours after the surgery and even tried to make it back for Tuesday's win over the A's.

O'Hoppe will be in a sling for about three weeks. His expected recovery and return is an estimated four to six months.



MARK J. TERRILL Associated Press

ANGELS SHORTSTOP Zach Neto makes a diving stop on a ground ball hit by Esteury Ruiz of Oakland.

Busch plays key role in debut

[**Dodgers,** from B12]

years after being drafted by the organization as a first-round pick from the University of North Carolina.

It was a long-awaited moment for the 25-year-old infielder, who had been tearing up the minor leagues and had risen to the No. 3 spot in the Dodgers' farm system rankings, according to MLB Pipeline, when he got the call Monday from Dodgers traveling secretary Scott Akasaki.

"Scott actually gave me a call [when] I was sleeping," Busch said, laughing about napping through Akasaki's initial ring.

"He told me I had a flight in three hours. It was pretty special."

After getting to play just 15 games as a prospect before the pandemic canceled the 2020 minor league season, Busch rose steadily through the farm system over the last two years.

He batted .271 with a combined 52 home runs and 175 RBIs between double A and triple A in 2021 and 2022.

After heating up near the end of spring training, he started this season in triple A on a tear, reaching safely in his first 21 games while posting a .967 on-base-plus-slugging percentage.

That lined him up to replace Max Muncy this week, after the Dodgers' starting third baseman became the latest member of the team to land on the paternity list.

And as Busch joined the club Tuesday — following a cross-country travel saga in which he flew from Albuquerque to Oklahoma City (after finishing a triple-A weekend trip), then Chicago to Pittsburgh (making a connection at Midway Airport on Monday night) — he was welcomed by the big league club with open arms.

"I just want him to know that he's earned this promotion," manager Dave Roberts said. "You can talk as much as you want to the players about being part of the plan, but when they keep performing [and don't get called up], it gets discouraging. ... But when we do have a chance to recognize performance, I think that's fantastic."

Added rookie outfielder James Outman, Busch's longtime minor league teammate and spring training roommate: "I think everybody knows it was just a matter of time for Busch. It's exciting. He's worked really hard."

Busch made an immediate impact Tuesday, playing an important part in the Dodgers' five-run comeback win.

In the sixth, he keyed a two-run rally with an RBI single, staying back on a two-strike slider to rope his first major league hit back up the middle.

"You kind of get lost in the moment, in a way," Busch said. "You're not trying to do too much."

In the eighth, he helped manufacture another important turning point, drawing a walk a few at-bats before Chris Taylor's go-ahead, three-run home run.

"The last 48 hours were pretty special — actually, not even 48, I don't think, maybe 30 hours or so," Busch said with a laugh, shortly after greeting the 30-plus friends and family who made the trek to see his debut. "The fact that we were able to come back and get the win and be able to see my family and friends afterward, it was awesome."

This first big league stint might not last long.

Muncy's paternity-list stay can last only three days. And when he returns, Busch, who went 0 for 4 in the Dodgers' 8-1 loss to the Pirates on Wednesday, likely will return to the minors.

It's a reflection of the somewhat unclear spot the prospect maintains in the organization, a promising offensive weapon who — despite time in the minors at first base, second base, left field and, in preparation for Muncy's expected absence over recent weeks, nine games at third base this year — still doesn't have a defined defensive spot.

"Obviously, he needs to continue to play well," Roberts said when asked how Busch could bolster the Dodgers' roster. "But I do think him being able to take down third base is only helping his stock."

In the meantime, though, Busch is relishing a chance to make an important first impression.

"I don't know if I have anything to prove," Busch said, wearing an easy smile during a pregame dugout scrum with reporters. "I get to be here.

"I get to play in a major league game tonight. That's pretty cool."

LAFC salvages tie in CONCACAF

Acosta redeems his late handball with a goal in stoppage time in semifinal's first leg.

LAFC 1
PHILADELPHIA 1

BY KEVIN BAXTER

LAFC's Kellyn Acosta went from goat to GOAT in less than 10 minutes Wednesday night, committing the handball that allowed the Philadelphia Union to take the lead late in the regulation time, then scoring the tying goal less than a minute into stoppage time, salvaging a 1-1 draw in a CONCACAF Champions League semifinal in Chester, Pa.

The two-leg playoff, decided by aggregate goals, will conclude Tuesday at BMO Stadium where LAFC has lost just 12 times in six seasons against MLS opponents.

"It's 1-1 and we're going back to L.A. and we have an away goal," LAFC coach Steve Cherundolo said. "It's a game we want to win and if we win, we're through to the final."

Goalkeeper John McCarthy was LAFC's hero for the first 82 minutes, making three stout saves to keep the game scoreless. But that was wasted when Jack McGlynn's shot from just outside the box struck Acosta in the arm, leading Mexican referee César Ramos to award a penalty after a lengthy video review.

McCarthy, who stopped two penalties in the tie-breaking shootout in LAFC's MLS Cup win over the Union last November, guessed wrong on Daniel Gazdag's try, allowing the Union to take a 1-0 lead.

On the other end Philadelphia keeper Andre Blake was tested just once during regulation time, that coming in the 66th minute against Denis Bouanga. But LAFC came alive in stoppage time.

A poor clearance attempt by Philadelphia struck the Union's Leon Flach and caromed to Acosta, who laid the ball off and sprinted into the box. Timothy Tillman found him there with a right-footed cross that Acosta, who was going to the turf, reached back and deflected over a perfectly positioned Blake on a high bounce to tie the score and keep the series even.

"We are ecstatic with the result, obviously not the performance," Cherundolo said. "But one thing about this team, they find ways and they never give up and they have the quality to put these goals in in these very small chances."

BASEBALL

NL STANDINGS

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
Arizona	14	12	.538	–	5-5
DODGERS	13	12	.520	½	5-5
San Diego	13	13	.500	1	5-5
San Francisco	11	13	.458	2	6-4
Colorado	8	18	.308	6	3-7
Central	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Pittsburgh	17	8	.680	–	8-2
Milwaukee	16	9	.640	1	6-4
Chicago	13	10	.565	3	6-4
Cincinnati	10	15	.400	7	4-6
St. Louis	9	16	.360	8	3-7
East	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Atlanta	17	8	.680	–	6-4
New York	14	11	.560	3	5-5
Miami	12	13	.480	5	4-6
Philadelphia	12	13	.480	5	7-3
Washington	9	14	.391	7	5-5

Wednesday's results

at Pittsburgh 8, DODGERS 1
at Cincinnati 5, Texas 3
at Cleveland 4, Colorado 1
at Milwaukee 6, Detroit 2
at Arizona 2, Kansas City 0
at Philadelphia 6, Seattle 5
at Atlanta 6, Miami 4
Washington 4, at New York 1
San Diego 5, at Chicago 3
at San Francisco 7, St. Louis 3

AL STANDINGS

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
Texas	14	10	.583	–	6-4
Houston	14	11	.560	½	7-3
ANGELS	13	12	.520	1½	6-4
Seattle	11	13	.458	3	5-5
Oakland	5	20	.200	9½	2-8
Central	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Minnesota	14	11	.560	–	4-6
Cleveland	12	13	.480	2	3-7
Detroit	9	14	.391	4	5-5
Chicago	7	18	.280	7	1-9
Kansas City	6	19	.240	8	2-8
East	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Tampa Bay	20	5	.800	–	7-3
Baltimore	16	8	.667	3½	8-2
Toronto	16	9	.640	4	6-4
New York	14	11	.560	6	5-5
Boston	13	13	.500	7½	5-5

Wednesday's results

at ANGELS 11, Oakland 3
at Cincinnati 5, Texas 3
New York 12, at Minnesota 6
at Toronto 8, Chicago 0
at Baltimore 6, Boston 2
at Cleveland 4, Colorado 1
at Milwaukee 6, Detroit 2
at Arizona 2, Kansas City 0
Houston 1, at Tampa Bay 0
at Philadelphia 6, Seattle 5

TODAY'S GAMES

NATIONAL LEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
Dodgers/Urías (L)	3-2	3.33	9:30 a.m.
PIT/Keller (R)	2-0	3.64	SNLA
MIA/Garrett (L)	1-0	2.84	9:15 a.m.
ATL/Wright (R)	0-1	5.93	MLB
SD/Lugo (R)	2-1	2.78	11:15 a.m.
CHI/Wesneski (R)	1-1	6.23	
STL/Mikolas (R)	0-1	7.46	12:45 p.m.
SF/Webb (R)	1-4	4.40	MLB
WAS/Williams (R)	1-1	3.38	4 p.m.
NY/Lucchesi (L)	1-0	0.00	

AMERICAN LEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
OAK/Sears (L)	0-1	4.98	1 p.m.
Angels/Ohtani (R)	3-0	0.64	BSW
BAL/Gibson (R)	4-0	3.60	3:30 p.m.
DET/Wentz (L)	0-3	7.56	MLB
TB/McClanahan (L)	4-0	1.86	4 p.m.
CHI/Cease (R)	2-0	2.73	
KC/Greinke (R)	0-3	4.61	4:30 p.m.
MIN/Mahle (R)	1-2	3.32	
NY/Cole (R)	4-0	0.79	5 p.m.
TEX/Heaney (L)	2-1	4.34	MLB*

INTERLEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
SEA/Kirby (R)	2-1	3.57	1 p.m.
PHI/Strahm (L)	1-2	3.00	

* joined in progress

ODDS

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
DODGERS	-172	at Pittsburgh	+144
at Atlanta	-198	Miami	+166
San Diego	-142	at Chicago Cubs	+120
St. Louis	+112	at San Francisco	-104
at N.Y Mets	-225	Washington	+188

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
at ANGELS	-335	Oakland	+270
Baltimore	-142	at Detroit	+120
Tampa Bay	-154	at Chicago White Sox	+130
at Minnesota	-200	Kansas City	+168
N.Y Yankees	-162	at Texas	+136

INTERLEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
Seattle	OFF	at PHILADELPHIA	OFF

LEADERS

NATIONAL LEAGUE >>>

Player	G	AB	H	R	Avg.
Arraez, Miami	21	76	32	8	.421
Acuña, Atlanta	25	102	37	22	.363
Marsh, Philadelphia	23	74	26	15	.351
Stott, Philadelphia	24	105	36	9	.343
Hoerner, Chicago	23	103	35	20	.340
Nimmo, New York	24	86	29	14	.337
Castellanos, Philadelphia	25	96	32	21	.333
E. Díaz, Colorado	23	72	24	8	.333
Bogaerts, San Diego	26	95	31	18	.326
Bryant, Colorado	24	93	29	11	.312
Home Runs					
Muncy, DODGERS					11
Alonso, New York					10
Wisdom, Chicago					9
Tellez, Milwaukee					8

AMERICAN LEAGUE >>>

Player	G	AB	H	R	Avg.
M. Chapman, Toronto	24	88	32	16	.364
Arozarena, Tampa Bay	24	91	31	18	.341
Bichette, Toronto	25	106	36	15	.340
Guerrero, Toronto	25	99	33	18	.333
Dubón, Houston	21	88	29	18	.330
Trout, ANGELS	22	86	28	17	.326
Kelenic, Seattle	22	77	25	11	.325
Verdugo, Boston	26	103	32	20	.311
Tucker, Houston	25	86	26	10	.302
Franco, Tampa Bay	24	96	29	13	.302
Home Runs					
Devers, Boston					9
Gallo, Minnesota					7
Kelenic, Seattle					7
A.García, Texas					7

PIRATES 8, DODGERS 1

Streak	Lost 1	**This month**	12-11
Home	6-6	**Road**	7-6
Division	7-6	**Interleague**	0-0

Next: Today at Pittsburgh, 9:30 a.m. PDT
TV/Radio: SportsNet LA/570, 1020

Dodgers	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Betts rf	4	0	0	0	.241
Freeman 1b	4	1	2	1	.289
Heyward cf	3	0	0	0	.159
Outman lf	4	0	0	0	.301
Vargas 2b	3	0	0	0	.221
Busch 3b	4	0	0	0	.143
Taylor ss	3	0	1	0	.173
Peralta dh	3	0	0	0	.179
Wynns c	3	0	1	0	.182
Totals	**31**	**1**	**4**	**1**	

Pittsburgh	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Hayes 3b	3	1	0	0	.229
Reynolds lf	4	0	1	1	.292
McCthn dh	4	0	1	1	.269
a-Maggi dh	1	0	0	0	.000
Santana 1b	4	1	1	0	.261
Swinski cf	2	1	1	0	.278
Joe rf	4	0	0	0	.308
1-Mrcno 2b	0	1	0	0	.286
Castro ss	4	2	2	2	.273
Bae 2b-cf	4	2	3	1	.254
Delay c	3	0	3	3	.368
Totals	**33**	**8**	**12**	**8**	

Dodgers	000	000	010 – 1	4	0
Pittsburgh	000	021	50x – 8	12	0

a-struck out for McCutchen in the 8th. 1-ran for Joe in the 7th.

Walks—Dodgers 2: Heyward 1, Vargas 1. Pittsburgh 5: Hayes 2, Santana 1, Suwinski 2 **Strikeouts**—Dodgers 10: Betts 1, Heyward 1, Outman 2, Vargas 1, Busch 2, Taylor 2, Wynns 1. Pittsburgh 4: Maggi 1, Joe 2, Bae 1. **LOB**—Dodgers 5, Pittsburgh 8. **2B**—Castro (4), Delay (4). **HR**—Freeman (4), off Moreta. **RBIs**—Freeman (9), Reynolds (19), McCutchen (13), Delay 3 (7), Castro 2 (10), Bae (9). **SB**—Suwinski (3), Santana (2), Vargas (1), Bae 3 (10), Castro (1). **CS**—Vargas (0). **S**—Delay. **Runners left in scoring position**—Dodgers 2 (Peralta, Outman); Pittsburgh 4 (Suwinski, Hayes, Castro 2). **RISP**—Dodgers 0 for 4; Pittsburgh 8 for 16. **Runners moved up**—Heyward. **GIDP**—Reynolds, Hayes. **DP**—Dodgers 2 (Vargas, Taylor, Freeman; Taylor, Vargas, Freeman).

Dodgers	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Gonsolin	3⅓	2	0	0	3	1	65	0.00
Bickford, L, 0-1	1	3	2	2	1	1	24	4.50
Bruihl	1	3	1	1	0	1	19	1.80
Almonte	1⅓	2	4	4	1	0	24	9.28
Vesia	1⅓	2	1	1	0	1	21	9.39
Pittsburgh	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Contreras, W, 3-1	6	2	0	0	2	5	87	3.58
Stephenson, H, 5	1	1	0	0	0	1	10	0.00
Moreta	2	1	1	1	0	4	36	4.50

Inherited runners-scored—Bickford 2-0, Bruihl 2-0, Almonte 2-0, Vesia 2-2. **HBP**—Almonte (Reynolds).

U—Jeff Nelson, CB Bucknor, Chris Segal, Ben May. **T**—2:48. **Tickets sold**—12,152 (38,753).

DIAMONDBACKS 2, ROYALS 0

Zac Gallen struck out 12 over 6⅓ innings, including six in a row, as his scoreless streak reached 28 innings. Arizona has four shutouts and Kansas City has been shut out six times.

Kansas City	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Witt Jr. ss	4	0	1	0	.253
Psqntino 1b	4	0	1	0	.284
Melendez dh	3	0	1	0	.184
Olivares lf	4	0	1	0	.250
Massey 2b	3	0	0	0	.179
b-Duffy	1	0	0	0	.359
Isbel cf	3	0	0	0	.200
c-Reyes	1	0	0	0	.216
Fermin c	4	0	0	0	.143
Lopez 3b	3	0	0	0	.184
Bradley Jr. rf	3	0	1	0	.132
Totals	**33**	**0**	**5**	**0**	

Arizona	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Marte 2b	3	0	0	0	.258
Rivera 3b	3	1	2	1	.750
a-Rojas 3b	1	0	0	0	.275
Gurriel Jr. lf	4	0	1	0	.267
Walker 1b	4	0	1	0	.227
Longoria dh	4	0	1	1	.239
Carroll rf	1	0	1	0	.311
Ahmed ss	3	0	0	0	.280
Thomas cf	2	1	0	0	.183
Herrera c	2	0	0	0	.208
Totals	**27**	**2**	**6**	**2**	

Kansas City	000	000	000 – 0	5	0
Arizona	000	110	00x – 2	6	1

a-grounded out for Rivera in the 8th. b-flied out for Massey in the 9th. c-lined out for Isbel in the 9th.

Walks—Kansas City 1: Melendez 1. Arizona 2: Carroll 1, Thomas 1. **Strikeouts**—Kansas City 13: Witt Jr. 1, Pasquantino 1, Melendez 1, Olivares 2, Massey 2, Isbel 2, Fermin 2, Lopez 1, Bradley Jr. 1. Arizona 9: Marte 1, Gurriel Jr. 1, Longoria 3, Ahmed 1, Thomas 2, Herrera 1. **E**—Ahmed (2). **LOB**—Kansas City 7, Arizona 6. **RBIs**—Longoria (5), Rivera (2). **CS**—Carroll (1). **S**—Herrera. **Runners left in scoring position**—Kansas City 2 (Fermin, Massey); Arizona 1 (Ahmed). **RISP**—Kansas City 0 for 5; Arizona 2 for 5. **Runners moved up**—Walker. **GIDP**—Walker. **DP**—Kansas City 1 (Lopez, Massey, Pasquantino).

Kansas City	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Yarbrough, L, 0-3	4	4	1	1	1	2	77	6.35
Garrett	1	1	1	1	1	2	20	2.79
Staumont	1	0	0	0	0	2	14	4.50
Taylor	1	0	0	0	0	2	17	3.60
Cuas	1	1	0	0	0	1	14	5.56
Arizona	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Gallen, W, 4-1	6⅓	4	0	0	0	12	97	2.15
McGough, H, 5	⅔	0	0	0	0	0	7	4.63
Castro, H, 4	1	1	0	0	0	1	13	2.53
Chafin, S, 4-5	1	0	0	0	1	1	20	2.61

Inherited runners-scored—McGough 1-0. **PB**—Yarbrough (Marte), Staumont (Carroll).

U— Edwin Jimenez, James Hoye, D.J. Reyburn, John Libka. **T**—2:31. **Tickets sold**—14,343 (48,359).

PADRES 5, CUBS 3

Fernando Tatis Jr. drove in three runs, including an insurance run in the ninth, with a pair of singles. San Diego's Xander Bogaerts extended his on-base streak to all 26 games this season.

San Diego	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Tatis Jr. rf	5	0	2	3	.222
Soto lf	5	0	0	0	.178
Machado 3b	4	0	1	0	.214
Bogaerts ss	4	1	1	0	.326
Cruz dh	4	1	1	0	.255
Crnwrth 1b	4	0	1	2	.221
Kim 2b	3	2	2	0	.215
Nola c	2	0	0	0	.140
a-Grisham cf	1	1	0	0	.195
Azocar cf	2	0	1	0	.256
Sullivan c	1	0	0	0	.000
Totals	**35**	**5**	**9**	**5**	

Chicago	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Hoerner 2b	5	0	1	1	.340
Swanson ss	4	0	0	0	.274
Happ lf	4	0	1	0	.293
Suzuki rf	4	1	1	0	.286
Mancini 1b	4	1	2	2	.253
Hosmer dh	3	0	1	0	.230
b-Madrigal	1	0	0	0	.286
Wisdom 3b	3	1	0	0	.241
Gomes c	4	0	1	0	.305
Velázquez cf	3	0	1	0	.500
Totals	**35**	**3**	**8**	**3**	

San Diego	000	200	201 – 5	9	0
Chicago	000	210	000 – 3	8	0

a-walked for Nola in the 7th. b-struck out for Hosmer in the 9th.

Walks—San Diego 2: Kim 1, Grisham 1. Chicago 2: Wisdom 1, Velázquez 1. **Strikeouts**—San Diego 7: Soto 3, Machado 1, Cronenworth 2, Grisham 1. Chicago 8: Swanson 1, Happ 2, Suzuki 1, Hosmer 1, Madrigal 1, Gomes 1, Velázquez 1.

LOB—San Diego 6, Chicago 7. **2B**—Machado (4), Velázquez (2), Gomes (1). **3B**—Cronenworth (2). **HR**—Mancini (3), off Wacha. **RBIs**—Cronenworth 2 (13), Tatis Jr. 3 (4), Mancini 2 (14), Hoerner (15). **SB**—Azocar (5), Kim 2 (3), Hoerner (10). **S**—Azocar.

Runners left in scoring position—San Diego 5 (Machado, Nola 2, Cronenworth, Tatis Jr.); Chicago 4 (Wisdom, Swanson, Hoerner 2). **RISP**—San Diego 3 for 10; Chicago 1 for 6.

Runners moved up—Bogaerts, Soto, Sullivan, Gomes, Velázquez.

San Diego	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Wacha	5	4	3	3	1	5	99	6.75
Martinez, W, 2-1	3	3	0	0	0	2	50	3.58
Hader, S, 9-9	1	1	0	0	1	1	22	0.75
Chicago	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Smyly	5	4	2	2	1	4	89	3.21
Alzolay, H, 5	1	2	1	1	0	0	17	2.92
Hughes, L, 0-1, BS, 0-1	⅓	1	1	1	1	0	15	3.18
Rucker	⅓	0	0	0	0	0	6	2.53
Boxberger	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	4.00
Merryweather	1	2	1	1	0	2	17	8.38

Inherited runners-scored—Hughes 1-1, Rucker 1-0.

U—Clint Vondrak, Gabe Morales, Scott Barry, Adam Beck. **T**—2:47. **Tickets sold**—28,955 (41,363).

GUARDIANS 4, ROCKIES 1

Tanner Bibee, formerly of Cal State Fullerton, called up before the game, struck out eight and gave up one run over 5 ⅔ innings in his MLB debut and Cleveland avoided a sweep.

Colorado	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Blckmn dh	3	0	1	0	.276
Profar lf	4	1	1	0	.205
Bryant rf	4	0	2	1	.312
Cron 1b	4	0	0	0	.221
McMhn 3b	4	0	1	0	.227
Trejo 2b	4	0	1	0	.224
Doyle cf	4	0	0	0	.273
Tovar ss	3	0	1	0	.192
Serven c	3	0	0	0	.143
Totals	**33**	**1**	**7**	**1**	

Cleveland	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Kwan lf	3	0	0	0	.258
Rosario ss	4	0	1	0	.250
Ramírz 3b	2	1	2	0	.271
Naylor dh	4	1	2	2	.197
Bell 1b	4	0	0	0	.211
Arias 1b	0	0	0	0	.167
Gimnz 2b	3	2	2	0	.253
Gonzalez rf	3	0	2	1	.197
Straw cf	1	0	1	0	.263
Brnnan cf	4	0	0	1	.212
Gallagher c	4	0	0	0	.091
Totals	**32**	**4**	**10**	**4**	

Colorado	000	001	000 – 1	7	1
Cleveland	200	100	01x – 4	10	0

Walks— Cleveland 4: Kwan 2, Ramírez 2. **Strikeouts**—Colorado 12: Blackmon 1, Profar 1, McMahon 2, Trejo 1, Doyle 2, Tovar 2, Serven 3. Cleveland 7: Kwan 1, Rosario 1, Naylor 1, Bell 2, Brennan 1, Gallagher 1 **E**—Serven (2). **LOB**—Colorado 6, Cleveland 9. **2B**—Tovar (5), Profar (3), Ramírez (9), Giménez (6), Gonzalez (2). **HR**—Naylor (3), off Márquez. **RBIs**—Bryant (8), Naylor 2 (11), Gonzalez (4), Brennan (9). **SB**—Rosario (5), Kwan (7). **CS**—Giménez (1). **Runners left in scoring position**—Colorado 1 (Blackmon); Cleveland 6 (Bell 3, Gallagher, Kwan, Naylor). **DP**—Colorado 1 (Trejo, Cron); Cleveland 1 (Giménez, Rosario, Bell).

Colorado	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Márquez, L, 2-2	3⅓	6	3	3	1	4	58	4.95
Bird	1⅓	2	0	0	1	0	15	3.71
Bard	1⅓	1	0	0	1	1	22	0.00
Hand	1	1	1	1	1	2	20	2.79
Johnson	⅓	0	0	0	0	0	5	3.86
Cleveland	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Bibee, W, 1-0	5⅔	6	1	1	0	8	91	1.59
Morgan, H, 2	1⅓	0	0	0	0	3	22	0.00
Stephan, H, 3	1	0	0	0	0	1	15	1.59
Clase, S, 8-9	1	1	0	0	0	0	20	2.08

Inherited runners-scored—Bird 1-0, Hand 2-0, Johnson 1-0, Morgan 1-0. **IBB**—by Hand (Ramírez). **HBP**—Bibee (Blackmon), Hand (Giménez).

U—Edwin Moscoso, Lance Barrett, Ramon De Jesus, Doug Eddings. **T**—2:32. **Tickets sold**—9,841 (34,788).

ANGELS 11, OAKLAND 3

Streak	Won 2	**This month**	13-11
Home	7-5	**Road**	6-7
Division	6-3	**Interleague**	2-1

Next: Today vs. Oakland, Angel Stadium, 1 p.m.
TV/Radio: BS West/830, 1330

Oakland	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Ruiz cf	3	1	2	1	.270
Diaz 2b	4	0	0	0	.238
Rooker lf	3	0	0	0	.315
Aguilar 1b	4	0	0	0	.246
Pérez c	3	0	0	0	.375
Díaz 3b	4	0	0	0	.148
Lngelrs dh	4	0	0	0	.211
K.Smith ss	4	2	2	1	.216
Capel rf	4	0	2	0	.309
Totals	**33**	**3**	**6**	**3**	

Angels	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Ward lf	3	1	0	0	.221
Trout cf	4	1	0	0	.311
Phillips cf	0	0	0	0	.000
Ohtani dh	5	1	2	3	.261
Rndon 3b	5	1	2	0	.241
Rnfroe rf	4	3	2	1	.280
Drury 2b	5	2	2	3	.238
Urshla 1b	4	0	1	0	.289
Thaiss c	3	1	2	2	.217
Neto ss	4	1	1	1	.214
Totals	**37**	**11**	**12**	**10**	

Oakland	101	010	000 – 3	6	3
Angels	051	021	02x – 11	12	1

Walks—Oakland 2: Rooker 1, Pérez 1. Angels 5: Ward 2, Trout 1, Renfroe 1, Thaiss 1.

Strikeouts—Oakland 7: Diaz 2, Aguilar 2, Díaz 1, Langeliers 1, K.Smith 1. Angels 10: Trout 2, Ohtani 1, Drury 3, Urshela 2, Neto 2.

E—K.Smith (1), Díaz (1), Rooker (2), Thaiss (3). **LOB**—Oakland 6, Angels 7. **2B**—Capel (4), Drury (4), Thaiss 2 (2), Neto (4). **HR**—K.Smith (2), off Sandoval; Renfroe (7), off Medina; Drury (4), off Medina; Ohtani (6), off C.Smith. **RBIs**—Rooker (15), K.Smith (6), Ruiz (10), Drury 3 (14), Thaiss 2 (4), Neto (4), Ohtani 3 (16), Renfroe (19). **SB**—Ruiz 3 (9).

Runners left in scoring position—Oakland 5 (Díaz, Rooker 3, Ruiz); Angels 6 (Drury, Rendon 2, Renfroe, Neto, Ward). **RISP**—Oakland 1 for 7; Angels 3 for 13.

Runners moved up—Ohtani, Renfroe.

Oakland	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Medina, L, 0-1	5	8	8	7	3	6	93	12.60
Fujinami	2	2	1	0	1	3	34	12.71
C.Smith	1	2	2	2	1	1	19	5.40
Angels	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Sandoval, W, 2-1	7	6	3	2	0	5	105	3.16
Silseth	2	0	0	0	2	2	39	0.00

HBP—Sandoval (Ruiz).

U—Jim Wolf, Mike Muchlinski, Nate Tomlinson, Sean Barber. **T**—2:30. **Tickets sold**—24,524 (45,517).

PHILLIES 6, MARINERS 5

Nick Castellanos had three hits and three RBIs, and Philadelphia overcame an injury to Taijuan Walker, who was removed after 68 pitches in four innings with right forearm tightness.

Seattle	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Rodríguez cf	5	1	1	1	.233
France 1b	4	0	0	0	.266
Kelenic lf	4	0	0	0	.325
Suárez 3b	4	0	2	0	.272
Hernández rf	4	0	0	0	.234
Raleigh c	3	1	0	0	.216
Pollock dh	4	1	1	0	.128
Wong 2b	2	1	1	0	.153
a-Caballero	1	0	0	0	.200
Crawford ss	4	1	3	4	.271
Totals	**35**	**5**	**8**	**5**	

Phila.	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Stott 2b	4	2	2	0	.343
Turner ss	4	0	1	0	.280
Schwrbr lf	4	0	1	1	.207
Cstllans dh	4	2	3	3	.333
Marsh cf	4	1	1	0	.351
Realmuto c	4	0	2	1	.259
Bohm 1b	4	0	1	1	.298
Cave rf	4	0	0	0	.186
Sosa 3b	4	1	1	0	.306
Totals	**36**	**6**	**12**	**6**	

Seattle	050	000	000 – 5	8	0
Philadelphia	201	010	02x – 6	12	0

a-struck out for Wong in the 9th.

Walks—Seattle 2: Raleigh 1, Wong 1. Philadelphia 1: Stott 1.

Strikeouts—Seattle 14: Rodríguez 4, France 1, Kelenic 3, Suárez 1, Hernández 2, Raleigh 1, Pollock 1, Caballero 1. Philadelphia 8: Schwarber 2, Marsh 1, Realmuto 1, Bohm 1, Cave 2, Sosa 1.

LOB—Seattle 5, Philadelphia 7. **2B**—Wong (1), Crawford (7). **HR**—Crawford (1), off Walker; Rodríguez (5), off Walker; Castellanos (3), off Gilbert. **RBIs**—Crawford 4 (8), Rodríguez (13), Castellanos 3 (16), Schwarber (11), Realmuto (8), Bohm (20). **SB**—Sosa (1).

Runners left in scoring position—Seattle 2 (Rodríguez 2); Philadelphia 4 (Stott 2, Marsh 2). **RISP**—Seattle 1 for 4; Philadelphia 4 for 12.

Runners moved up—Turner 2, Castellanos.

Seattle	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Gilbert	5	7	4	4	1	6	86	4.23
Gott, H, 5	1⅓	0	0	0	0	2	15	2.08
Speier, H, 4	⅔	1	0	0	0	0	9	0.00
Topa, L, 0-2, BS, 0-1	0	4	2	2	0	0	16	2.00
Murfee	1	0	0	0	0	0	12	1.74
Philadelphia	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Walker	4	5	5	5	2	6	68	4.97
Ortiz	2	1	0	0	0	2	31	1.29
Domínguez	1	1	0	0	0	2	17	7.45
Kimbrel, W, 1-0	1	0	0	0	0	2	14	4.50
Alvarado, S, 4-5	1	1	0	0	0	2	22	0.79

Inherited runners-scored—Murfee 2-0. **WP**—Gilbert.

U—Ryan Wills, Andy Fletcher, Erich Bacchus, Laz Diaz. **T**—2:34. **Tickets sold**—32,641 (42,901).

GIANTS 7, CARDINALS 3

LaMonte Wade Jr. homered, tripled and knocked in two runs, and Anthony DeSclafani struck out six in six innings for San Francisco. Paul Goldschmidt hit two solo homers for St. Louis.

St. Louis	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Nootbaar cf	4	0	0	0	.222
Gldsmdt 1b	5	2	4	2	.315
Gorman dh	3	0	1	0	.295
Arenado 3b	4	0	0	0	.260
Contreras c	3	0	1	0	.275
Burleson rf	2	1	0	0	.232
O'Neill lf	3	0	0	0	.253
Donovan 2b	3	0	0	0	.253
DeJong ss	4	0	2	1	.462
Totals	**31**	**3**	**8**	**3**	

San Fran.	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Slater cf	4	0	2	1	.571
Estrda ss	5

NFL DRAFT

Chargers likely to put the focus on overall depth

With 21st pick and his starters set, Telesco says he'd like to find contributors in draft.

By Jeff Miller

Chargers general manager Tom Telesco this week specifically highlighted only one position group: tight end.

Although that is an unusually deep group, the club's social media team recently touted wide receiver Zay Flowers and, before that, running back Bijan Robinson.

Though the names varied, the consensus among the most prominent national mock drafts is the Chargers will take an offensive player Thursday at No. 21.

All this means nothing is certain as Round 1 arrives — ending months of speculation founded in everything from fact to fantasy.

"I don't know what other people are going to do," Telesco said during his predraft news conference. "Everyone thinks they do, but I just don't know. Nobody gives out information. So you make educated guesses."

Beginning his 11th draft as general manager, Telesco also offered the most biting reality of the process, telling a roomful of reporters that their mock drafts might be just as accurate as his.

The overriding thought that the Chargers need to bolster the personnel around Justin Herbert is understandable. Scoring is what today's NFL is all about and keeping a young franchise quarterback happy is never a bad idea.

But this is also a team that needs to be better on the other side of the ball, particularly with a head coach in Brandon Staley who rose to prominence because of his ability to coordinate a defense.

The Chargers revealed late last season what their more well-rounded version can look like with a four-game, playoff-clinching winning streak during which they limited each opponent to 17 or fewer points.

The uncertainty surrounding the team's first pick Thursday night speaks to the current condition of the roster. Telesco is not tasked with securing a player who'll need to start immediately.

The Chargers are looking to replace a pair of first-stringers in slot cornerback Bryce Callahan and safety Nasir Adderley, but they have in-house options at both spots, including Ja'Sir Taylor and JT Woods, 2022 draft picks.

Instead, the Chargers need players who, as rookies, can compete for time and add depth throughout a lineup that appears top heavy. Not starters, no, but Telesco needs contributors.

"You'd like to construct it where, going into the draft, you feel like you're solid across the positions to where you don't really feel forced to take a certain position," he said. "I feel like that's where we are right now.

"There really aren't many spots that we couldn't use a player, other than maybe quarterback and left tackle. We'll see how it plays out. But I feel like our roster is at a point where we're not forced to go one direction or another."

Given his roster and a draft class that seems to be lacking in first-round depth, Telesco could trade back to perhaps acquire an additional second-day pick.

But trading back is something he has not done with the Chargers, that history strongly suggesting such a move is unlikely.

The team does have some health issues that could be considerations during the draft, including cornerback J.C. Jackson and defensive tackle Austin Johnson — both starters — coming off major knee injuries.

Defensive tackle Otito Ogbonnia, who was developing into a key rotational piece during his rookie season last fall, also continues to rehabilitate from a patellar tendon tear.

Austin Ekeler is healthy but his status for the start of the 2023 season is unsettled, as well.

With one year remaining on his contract, the team's top running back would like an extension.

Ekeler has permission to seek a trade, a development that has generated little movement. Telesco said the circumstances surrounding Ekeler would not affect the team's choices over the draft's three days.

As it is, the Chargers have selected a running back each of the last three years and four out of five overall.

Telesco cited last year's fourth-round pick — Isaiah Spiller — as someone the Chargers would like to see emerge in the backfield.

"He's still the same talent that we saw last year," Telesco said. "Like a lot of these players, they may earn roles more toward the middle or back end of their rookie contract, maybe not right at the beginning, which is OK, which is normal."

After they select 21st, the Chargers' next two picks come Friday at Nos. 54 (second round) and 85 (third). They have one pick in each of the four remaining rounds Saturday.

Whatever the Chargers do Thursday and beyond, they'll finish the weekend with another round of offseason questions answered.

"There will be a good player for us to choose," Staley said. "I think that that's what we're committed to — choosing a player we all believe in and know there's a role for him, a vision for his path in his time as a Charger."

Godofredo A. Vásquez Associated Press

TANNER McKEE, who played at Stanford last season, is one of a number of next-tier, draft-eligible quarterbacks the Rams could consider selecting after they chose to not re-sign either of their backups from 2022.

Rams might make rare move

With Stafford the only quarterback on roster, position is one of team's many needs.

By Gary Klein

In 11 NFL drafts as the Rams general manager, Les Snead has selected nearly 100 players.

But only three quarterbacks. And none since 2016, when the Rams traded up a record 14 picks in the first round to select Jared Goff at No. 1.

This year's draft could be the first time in seven years — and the first time during the Sean McVay era — that the Rams select a prospect who plays the sport's most important position.

Matthew Stafford, 35, remains the starter as he prepares for his 15th NFL season. Stafford led the Rams to a Super Bowl title two years ago and then signed a four-year extension that included $120 million in guarantees.

After last season's 5-12 finish, the Rams did not resign backups John Wolford or Bryce Perkins. So Snead and McVay are in the market — through the draft, post-draft free agency or a trade — for at least two quarterbacks.

For the seventh year in a row, the Rams do not have a first-round pick.

That means top quarterback prospects such as Bryce Young, C.J. Stroud, Anthony Richardson, Will Levis and Hendon Hooker probably will be gone when the Rams select their first player in the second round with the No. 36 overall pick.

Brigham Young's Jaren Hall, Stanford's Tanner McKee, Houston's Clayton Tune, Purdue's Aidan O'Connell, UCLA's Dorian Thompson-Robinson, Texas Christian's Max Duggan, Fresno State's Jake Haener and Georgia's Stetson Bennett are among other quarterbacks available.

The Rams have been "intentional" about evaluating quarterbacks in the second tier, Snead said.

"For whatever reason, you don't have them in tier one," he said, "but they have just enough of some tier one-type variables that you go, 'Wow, they might be a tier two, they might have a chance to be a backup, they might have a chance.' "

When evaluating quarterbacks, McVay said decision-making, passing accuracy, innate leadership traits, and poise and performance in important moments are factors.

"There's certain guys that are easier evals just because they might be doing certain things that you would ask," McVay said, "but that doesn't mean that they'll end up being a better player.

"So I think you have to be able to look at the total group and their total body of work, and then figure out how do they elevate others around them and what are those elite traits and do we feel like it translates to our level and what we would ask, and then ultimately we would adjust to them as well."

With multiple needs — edge rusher, receiver, offensive and defensive line and cornerback among them — there is no predicting when the Rams might select a quarterback.

Or if they will.

"If you have a need and you just force a draft pick to fill a need, but that pick doesn't fill the need, at the end of the day, all that work, you still have a need even though you filled a roster spot," Snead said.

"So that's the tricky thing and probably quarterbacks are a little bit trickier just because that is a tougher position to predict success in, especially from college to the NFL."

In 2014, Snead selected Southern Methodist quarterback Garrett Gilbert in the sixth round with the 214th pick. The Rams waived Gilbert at the end of training camp, signed him to the practice squad and then released him during the season. Gilbert was on the New England Patriots practice squad last season.

In 2015, Snead chose Oregon State quarterback Sean Mannion in the third round with the 89th pick. Mannion played in 10 games in four seasons, starting once. Last season, Mannion was on the Seattle Seahawks' practice squad.

Under former coach Jeff Fisher, Goff did not play until the 10th game of his rookie season. He was 0-7 as a starter but flourished the next season under McVay. In 2017, Goff led the Rams to their first playoff appearance since 2004. The next season, the Rams advanced to Super Bowl LIII before losing to the New England Patriots.

The Rams rewarded Goff with an extension that included a then-record $110 million in guarantees. But the Rams missed the playoffs in 2019 and lost in the NFC divisional round in 2020, McVay souring on Goff down the stretch.

Two weeks after the season, Snead dealt Goff, two first-round draft picks and a third-round pick to the Lions for Stafford.

Stafford passed for 41 touchdowns in 2021 and led the Rams to victory over the Cincinnati Bengals in Super Bowl LVI at SoFi Stadium. Last season, however, he worked through right-elbow issues, was sidelined because of a concussion and sat out the final seven games because of a spinal bruise.

Meantime, the NFC West rival San Francisco 49ers advanced to the NFC championship game with rookie Brock Purdy stepping in for injured Jimmy Garoppolo.

The 49ers had selected Purdy in the seventh round with the 262nd pick, the last one in the draft.

Does the 49ers' success with Purdy — he will carry a salary-cap number of only $889,000 this season — influence Snead's thinking?

"It just shows you that it can be done," Snead said, "and I do think right player, right situation, that's probably the key, right?"

McVay complimented Purdy for his performance but, citing Stafford's success in his first season with the Rams, he said there are different ways to approach quarterback issues.

"It's kind of a moving target," he said, "and it shows you that there's different ways to be able to get it done."

Round 1 order

1. Carolina-a
2. Houston
3. Arizona
4. Indianapolis
5. Seattle-b
6. Detroit-c
7. Las Vegas
8. Atlanta
9. Chicago-d
10. Philadelphia-e
11. Tennessee
12. Houston-f
13. Green Bay-g
14. New England
15. New York Jets-h
16. Washington
17. Pittsburgh
18. Detroit
19. Tampa Bay
20. Seattle
21. CHARGERS
22. Baltimore
23. Minnesota
24. Jacksonville
25. New York Giants
26. Dallas
27. Buffalo
28. Cincinnati
29. New Orleans
30. Philadelphia
31. Kansas City

a-from Chicago; b-from Denver; c-from RAMS; d-from Carolina; e-from New Orleans; f-from Cleveland; g-from N.Y. Jets; h-from Green Bay.

Stroud, Young forged strong friendship before spotlight

[**Draft,** from B12]

There's a strong possibility this will be the first draft in which two quarterbacks from Southern California are taken within the first seven picks, with the closest parallel being 2018 when Sam Darnold went third and Josh Rosen 10th.

"I did 3½ years in Columbus, Ohio, and I was back [in Southern California] for three months training and getting ready," Stroud said. "It was amazing for me to get back and have an opportunity to see family, kind of feel the California sun, because I missed it."

His friendship with Young dates to eighth grade, when Stroud played quarterback for the Pomona Steelers, part of rapper Snoop Dogg's league, and Young was quarterback for the Inland Empire Ducks from American Youth Football.

"We played each other and they kicked our tail," recalled Stroud with a smile, sounding as if he'd rather forget that first encounter.

Darron Cummings Associated Press

NFL QUARTERBACKS-TO-BE C.J. Stroud, left, and Bryce Young faced off in youth football games.

"I didn't play good. I threw an interception. I didn't have any touchdowns, I was struggling. But Bryce threw like four touchdowns; he's always been nice. I was in the process of learning quarterback, getting better and better."

Stroud even stepped in at cornerback for that game but never reeled in a throw by Young.

"I didn't get no picks — I wish," he said. "I'd be talking mess to Bryce right now about that."

Young was diplomatic in his recollections.

"He played well, but as a team we played a little bit ..." Young said. "That was a fun game for sure. It was a really big deal for eighth-grade football back in the day. It was a really hyped game. I remember it super clear.

"One of the corners wasn't doing so well, so he went in at corner too. Me and C.J. are super close and it's super cool to have him alongside in this process. ... Being such a great human that C.J. is, put aside all the stuff you see on film of how amazing he is on the field, having such a great person to be working out with and train with, to have this experience with has been a huge blessing for me."

As with every NFL event, the draft is constantly expanding. Kansas City's will be the biggest draft site in league history with a footprint of about 3.1 million square feet — more than a million square feet larger than either of the last two drafts, in Cleveland and Las Vegas.

There are 7½ miles of temporary fences, a pop-up structure the size of a football field and more than 10,000 square feet of screens and video boards.

Richardson, for one, can feel the energy.

"It didn't really hit me until [Tuesday] when I got here," said the Gators star, who set multiple combine records for quarterbacks. "I'm like, 'Bam, OK, this is really happening.' I'm excited to see what [Thursday] brings."

Rick Neuheisel, the UCLA quarterback turned longtime coach, said there's something highly unusual about this class of prospects. All of the quarterbacks faced a Georgia Bulldogs team brimming with NFL talent, and in 2021 — the year Young won the Heisman Trophy — he proved himself a cut above.

Young threw for 421 yards and three touchdowns in a 41-24 win over Georgia in the 2021 SEC championship game, a month before losing to the Bulldogs in the national championship game with 369 yards passing but two interceptions.

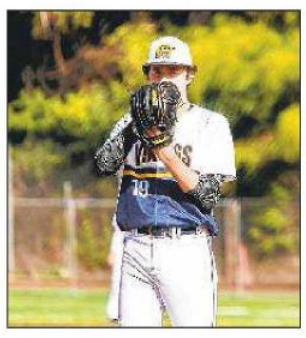
"Bryce Young is the class of this deal," said Neuheisel, who co-hosts a SiriusXM NFL Radio show with Mark Dominik. "Bryce Young in any quarterback class would be a top-10 pick. These other guys I don't believe would be in the top 10 but for this class."

The best thing about the draft is we don't have to wait long to have the months of speculation, smoke screens and mysteries answered.

Feeling ecstasy after the agony

Mahon having stellar senior season in his joyous return from a torn knee ligament.

ERIC SONDHEIMER
ON HIGH SCHOOLS



PAULA NUCCI

TANNER MAHON of Campbell Hall has been near-perfect on the hill and great at the plate.

After a year in agony, when a knee injury he sustained while sliding wiped out his junior baseball season, Tanner Mahon's smile has returned, along with the happy-go-lucky personality, not to mention the near-perfect senior season he is experiencing at Studio City Campbell Hall High.

"I've been lucky to live an awesome life, but that was without a doubt the hardest thing I had to go through," Mahon said of the torn posterior cruciate ligament. "I had so many dreams and aspirations taken away in one second. I would do anything to wake up for 7 a.m. practices. It was really, really hard."

Mahon feared the worst, being sidelined at the most important part of college recruiting, unable to pitch or hit during the spring or summer.

Fast forward to this week and the final games of the regular season. He hasn't given up an earned run in 43 innings with a fastball in the mid-80s and is hitting .449 with 38 RBIs for a 19-2-1 team ranked No. 2 in Southern Section Division 6.

He has committed to one of the best academic schools on the East Coast, Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn., where he hopes to use his 4.0 grade-point average and love for writing to prepare for a profession in writing like his mother, who works for People magazine.

But when is his mom going to put him on the cover?

"Hopefully next year, sexiest man alive," he said.

At 6 feet 3 and 195 pounds, the 18-year-old is an example of how overcoming adversity can strengthen one's resolve and be turned into a positive.

"I really thought that was going to be it," he said of the injury. "I've always had a lot of confidence, but there was little left."

The injury occurred when he made an awkward slide into second base last season.

"Right away it was a pain I had never felt before," he said. "It was horrible. I heard a pop. The trainer said he's never seen a basketball or baseball player hurt their PCL before. I guess it was impressive on my part."

He went through eight months of rehabilitation without surgery. He has had a series of injuries in high school, including a broken hand and a strained back.

"You'd think I'm a 35-year-old man," he said jokingly.

Everything, though, has worked out this season to the point he's pitching with complete confidence.

"I love it," he said.

The interesting part is how does a teenager, who usually has been positive, get back up when knocked down?

"It feels so amazing," he said. "I'm having so much fun and I know how much a gift it is and quickly it can go away. I'm proud how quickly I was able to turn it around."

Fan support for Campbell Hall is growing. Parents are showing up to hand out popsicles or hot chocolate to other parents and there are so many cameras and Go Pros attached to fences that if anything happens, the school won't have to worry about finding a replay.

Mahon has played travel ball with several Sherman Oaks Notre Dame and Studio City Harvard-Westlake players. He has attended Campbell Hall since seventh grade. He has no qualms about going to play Division III baseball in college next season.

Coach Brad Himes offered a tale about Mahon.

"While Tanner was rehabbing last year, I was walking back to the office and saw him playing catch with one of his teammates in a knee brace," Himes said. "I walk over, 'Tanner be careful.'

"[Mahon said] 'I know coach, but I have to get ready so I can be with my teammates.'

"Tanner is the definition of a leader and has truly earned everything he has accomplished this year."

PRO CALENDAR

	THU 27	FRI 28	SAT 29	SUN 30	MON 1
DODGERS	at Pittsburgh 9:30 a.m. SNLA	ST. LOUIS 7 Apple TV+	ST. LOUIS 6 SNLA, FS1	ST. LOUIS 1 SNLA	PHILA. 7 SNLA
ANGELS	OAKLAND 1 BSW	at Milwaukee 5 BSW	at Milwaukee 4 BSW	at Milwaukee 11 a.m. BSW	
LAKERS		MEMPHIS* 7:30 SpecSN, ESPN		at Memphis* (if necessary) TBD	
KINGS			EDMONTON* TBD		at Edmonton* (if necessary) TBD
GALAXY			at Orlando 4:30 Apple TV		
LAFC	TUESDAY VS. PHILADELPHIA**, 7 p.m.				
ANGEL CITY			at Portland 7:30 Paramount+		

Shade denotes home game. *Playoffs **CONCACAF Champions League

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
AUTO RACING		
2:30 a.m. (Fri.)	Formula One, Azerbaijan Grand Prix, practice	**TV:** ESPN2, ESPND
BASEBALL		
9:15 a.m.	Miami at Atlanta	**TV:** MLB
9:30 a.m.	Dodgers at Pittsburgh	**TV:** SNLA **R:** 570, 1020
12:45 p.m.	St. Louis at San Francisco	**TV:** MLB
1 p.m.	Oakland at Angels	**TV:** BSW **R:** 830
3:30 p.m.	Baltimore at Detroit	**TV:** MLB
6:30 p.m.	New York Yankees at Texas (joined in progress)	**TV:** MLB
BASKETBALL		
8 a.m.	Africa League, Cape Town vs. SLAC	**TV:** NBA
5:30 p.m.	NBA playoffs, Boston at Atlanta, Game 6	**TV:** TNT
COLLEGE BASEBALL		
4 p.m.	Mississippi State at Tennessee	**TV:** SEC
4 p.m.	Miami at Louisville	**TV:** ACC
5 p.m.	Texas A&M at Arkansas	**TV:** ESPNU
COLLEGE BEACH VOLLEYBALL: PAC-12 TOURNAMENT		
8:30 a.m.	California vs. USC	**TV:** Pac-12, Pac-12LA
10:15 a.m.	Stanford vs. UCLA	**TV:** Pac-12, Pac-12LA
Noon	Utah vs. Washington	**TV:** Pac-12, Pac-12LA
1:45 p.m.	Arizona State vs. Arizona	**TV:** Pac-12, Pac-12LA
3:30 p.m.	Teams TBA	**TV:** Pac-12, Pac-12LA
5:15 p.m.	Teams TBA	**TV:** Pac-12, Pac-12LA
GOLF		
12:30 p.m.	Mexico Open at Vidanta, first round	**TV:** Golf
3:30 p.m.	LPGA JM Eagle L.A. Championship, first round	**TV:** Golf
9 p.m.	DP World Tour, Korea Championship, second round	**TV:** Golf
HOCKEY		
3:30 a.m.	IIHF U-18 World Championship, quarterfinal, U.S. vs. Czech Republic	**TV:** NHL
8:30 a.m.	IIHF U-18 World Championship, quarterfinal, Canada vs. Switzerland	**TV:** NHL
4 p.m.	NHL playoffs, Tampa Bay at Toronto, Game 5	**TV:** TBS
4:30 p.m.	NHL playoffs, New York Rangers at New Jersey, Game 5	**TV:** ESPN2
7 p.m.	NHL playoffs, Winnipeg at Vegas, Game 5	**TV:** ESPN2
HORSE RACING		
10 a.m.	America's Day at the Races	**TV:** FS2
PRO FOOTBALL		
5 p.m.	NFL draft, Round 1	**TV:** 7, ESPN, NFL, ESPND
SOCCER		
10:30 a.m.	Spain, Valladolid at Valencia	**TV:** ESPND
11:45 a.m.	England, Newcastle at Everton	**TV:** USA
1 p.m.	Spain, Sevilla at Athletic Club	**TV:** ESPND
TENNIS		
10 a.m.	Madrid Open, early rounds	**TV:** Tennis
2 a.m. (Fri.)	Madrid Open, early rounds	**TV:** Tennis

THE DAY IN SPORTS

NASCAR's Bowman hurt in crash

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

Alex Bowman suffered a fractured vertebra in a sprint car crash and Hendrick Motorsports said Wednesday the NASCAR driver will miss at least the next three Cup races.

Bowman will be replaced by **Josh Berry,** who filled in for **Chase Elliott** for five races as Elliott recovered from a broken leg. Berry will be in the No. 48 Chevrolet starting this weekend at Dover International Speedway in Delaware.

Bowman suffered a compression fracture in an accident Tuesday evening — which was his 30th birthday — while competing in a sprint car event at 34 Raceway in West Burlington, Iowa. The event was part of a racing series created by Hendrick teammate **Kyle Larson.**

"First, I want to let everyone know I'm feeling ok. My focus is now on healing and resting," Bowman wrote on social media.

Bowman has six top-10 finishes through 10 races this season. Hendrick will request a medical waiver to allow Bowman to remain eligible for the playoffs.

Berry drives for Hendrick-affiliated JR Motorsports in the Xfinity Series and has five career wins at NASCAR's second level.

ETC.

USA Boxing quits the IBA

USA Boxing terminated its 77-year membership in the International Boxing Assn. ahead of its move to a rival governing body that hopes to return the sport to Olympic favor.

USA Boxing intends to join the World Boxing International Federation, which was established two weeks ago in an attempt to preserve the Olympic future of boxing heading into the second straight Games without IBA involvement.

Boxers from the U.S. have won more medals than any nation in Olympic history. But the U.S. was among several countries that pulled out of the IBA world championships this year, and the end of the relationship highlights the profound schism between IBA leadership and an apparently growing number of national programs .

The International Olympic Committee suspended its recognition of the IBA in 2019 and hasn't restored its status because of concerns about the IBA's finances, governance and competition judging. The divide between the bodies has grown deeper in recent months, with the IBA defiantly announcing its own Olympic qualification tournaments even though it no longer has the power to choose Olympic fighters.

Boxing, part of every Olympic program but one since 1904, is not on the provisional program for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, although the IOC said it still could be added.

Goals from **Marvin Loria** and **Tyler Clegg** — one in each half — and a stoppage-time score from **Jaroslaw Niezgoda** lifted the Portland Timbers to a 3-1 win over the Orange County Soccer Club in a third-round U.S. Open Cup game. **Milan Iloski** had the lone goal for OCSC, which plays in the second-tier USL Championship.

— KEVIN BAXTER

Chase Young could become a free agent following next season after the Washington Commanders opted not to pick up the edge rusher's fifth-year, $17.5-million option, the Associated Press reported.

Mirra Andreeva, 15, became the third-youngest player to win a main-draw match at a WTA 1000 tournament, beating **Leylah Fernandez** at the Madrid Open.

Oregon State athletic director **Scott Barnes** was released from the hospital after experiencing a serious medical event while attending an award ceremony at Fresno State on Saturday night. ... The family of a man fatally struck by a vehicle driven by former Syracuse basketball coach **Jim Boeheim** in 2019 agreed to settle a lawsuit against Boeheim and the university.

TENNIS RESULTS

$8.5-MILLION MADRID OPEN
At Madrid
Surface: Red clay

MEN'S SINGLES (first round)—Hugo Gaston, France, d. Jeremy Chardy, France, 6-3, 6-4; Gregoire Barrere, France, d. Emilio Nava, 6-0, 5-7, 6-3; Alex Molcan, Slovakia, d. Yibing Wu, China, 6-2, 6-4; Albert Ramos-Vinolas, Spain, d. Ilya Ivashka Belarus, 4-6, 7-6 (3), 6-2; Quentin Halys, France, d. Alexei Popyrin, Australia, 4-6, 6-4, 6-4; Roberto Carballes Baena, Spain, d. David Goffin, Belgium, 6-4, 6-4; Alexander Bublik, Kazakhstan, d. Daniel Elahi Galan, Colombia, 7-6 (15), 6-7 (4), 6-4; Yannick Hanfmann, Germany, d. Juan Pablo Varillas, Peru, 6-4, 3-6, 6-3; Stan Wawrinka, Switzerland, d. Maxime Cressy, 6-7 (3), 6-3, 7-6 (4); Hugo Grenier, France, d. Diego Schwartzman, Argentina, 7-5, 6-4; Oscar Otte, Germany, d. Pavel Kotov, Russia, 6-3, 4-6, 6-4; Matteo Arnaldi, Italy, d. Benoit Paire, France, 6-1, 3-6, 7-6 (6); Emil Ruusuvuori, Finland, d. Ugo Humbert, France, 7-6 (6), 7-6 (4); Richard Gasquet, France, d. Martin Landaluce, Spain, 6-2, 6-1; Thiago Monteiro, Brazil, d. Boma Gojo, Croatia, 7-6 (9), 4-6, 6-3; Jaume Munar, Spain, d. Thanasi Kokkinakis, Australia, 7-6 (7), 7-6 (3).

WOMEN'S SINGLES (first round)—Tatjana Maria, Germany, d. Alexandra Eala, Philippines, 6-1, 6-1; Mirra Andreeva, Russia, d. Leylah Annie Fernandez, Canada, 6-3, 6-4; Mayar Sherif, Egypt, d. Camila Giorgi, Italy, 4-6, 6-4, retired; Caty McNally d. Dalma Galfi, Hungary, 4-6, 6-0, 6-3; Rebeka Masarova, Spain, d. Cristina Bucsa, Spain, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4; Arantxa Rus, Netherlands, d . Amanda Anisimova, 7-5, 6-2. Anna Kalinskaya, Russia, d. Brenda Fruhvirtova, Czech Republic, 2-6, 6-4, 6-4; Camila Osorio, Colombia, d. Clara Burel, France, 6-3, 6-4; Aliaksandra Sasnovich, Belarus, d. Elina Svitolina, Ukraine, 6-4, 7-5; Nuria Parrizas Diaz, Spain, d. Anna Blinkova, Russia, 6-3, 6-0; Wang Xiyu, China, d. Varvara Gracheva, Russia, 6-7 (2), 6-3, 6-4; Magdalena Frech, Poland, d. Jasmine Paolini, Italy, 6-2, 6-3; Irene Burillo Escorihuela, Spain, d. Kaia Kanepi, Estonia, 6-7 (5), 6-2, 6-4; Lesia Tsurenko, Ukraine, d. Lucia Bronzetti, Italy, 6-1, 6-3; Julia Grabher, Austria, d. Viktoriya Tomova, Bulgaria, 6-1, 7-6 (5); Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova, Russia, d. Victoria Jimenez Kasintseva, Andorra, 6-1, 6-7 (5), 7-6 (7); Marketa Vondrousova, Czech Republic, d. Marina Bassols Ribera, Spain, 6-1, 6-3; Alycia Parks d. Anna-Karolina Schmiedlova, Slovakia, 6-2, 6-7 (5), 6-2; Laura Siegemund, Germany, d. Nadia Podoroska, Argentina, 3-6, 6-3, 6-3; Eugenie Bouchard, Canada, d. Dayana Yastremska, Ukraine, 6-7 (6), 6-2, 6-2; Danka Kovinic, Montenegro, d. Sara Errani, Italy, 6-4, 6-0; Jaqueline Adina Cristian, Romania, d. Sloane Stephens, 5-7, 6-4, 6-4; Alize Cornet, France, d. Elena-Gabriela Ruse, Romania, 6-7 (6), 6-4, 6-3.

NHL PLAYOFF ROUNDUP

Tkachuk, Panthers play 'pinball' to stay alive against Bruins

ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Florida Panthers watched Bruins forward Brad Marchand skate in alone on goalie Sergei Bobrovsky, with the seconds ticking away in the third period of a tied game.

If Marchand scores, Florida's season is over.

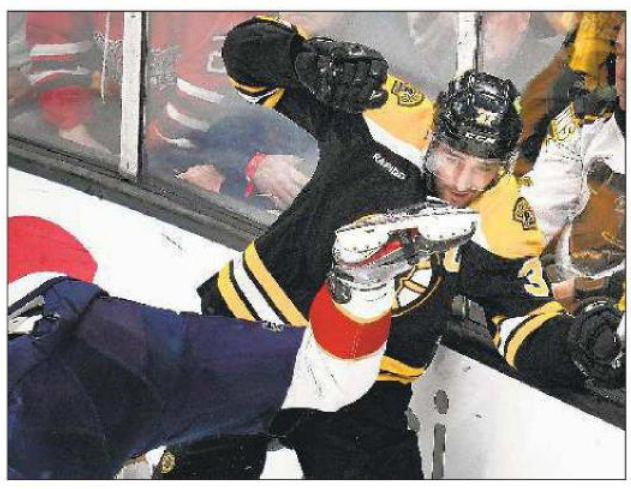
"I knew it wasn't going in," Panthers coach Paul Maurice said, before admitting that he was lying. "You can't know that it wasn't going in, so I'm full of [it] when I just said that to you.

"But I don't feel like we've had a whole lot of advantage in this series, in the karma of the game," Maurice said after Bobrovsky's save with one second left sent the game into overtime, where Matthew Tkachuk won it. "I just felt that we had stored enough karma that that shot wouldn't go in."

Tkachuk scored six minutes into overtime, and Bobrovsky stopped 44 shots to help the Panthers beat the Bruins 4-3 on Wednesday night and force their first-round playoff series back to Florida for a sixth game.

One game after Bruins goalie Linus Ullmark tried to fight Tkachuk, the Panthers forward took advantage of Ullmark's sloppy puck play behind the net to cut Boston's lead in the best-of-seven series to 3-2.

"A little bit of pinball and it somehow got right on my stick. I made sure to put it home," Tkachuk said. "Bob made a hell of a save, otherwise our season's over. ... Things happen fast in playoffs."



CHARLES KRUPA Associated Press

THE BRUINS' Patrice Bergeron (37) avoids taking a skate to his face after hitting Florida's Aaron Ekblad.

Anthony Duclair, Sam Bennett and Sam Reinhart also scored — each one giving the Panthers a lead. Tkachuk also drew a penalty and then assisted on the power-play goal that gave Florida a 3-2 lead five minutes into the third period.

After Boston tied it — and Bobrovsky preserved the lead — Marchand's pass to Pavel Zacha at the point in the Florida zone skidded all the way down the ice and behind the Boston net. Ullmark carelessly played it right to Carter Verhaeghe in the corner; he shot it off Ullmark's leg, and it bounced to Tkachuk in the slot.

He flipped it over to his backhand and beat the badly out-of-position goalie.

"That guy is a — and then you put a long string of profanity — gamer," Maurice said. "He's just a gamer. Use your own words."

Seattle 3, at Colorado 2: Yanni Gourde scored early in the third period and rookie Tye Kartye tallied in his NHL debut as the Kraken stunned the defending champions to take a 3-2 series lead as they head back to Seattle on Friday.

Morgan Geekie also added a goal and Philipp Grubauer made 26 saves against his former team.

Nathan MacKinnon and Evan Rodrigues scored for the Avalanche, who played without suspended top defenseman Cale Makar.

Panthers 4, Bruins 3,OT

Florida	1	1	1	1	– 4
Boston	0	1	2	0	– 3

FIRST PERIOD: 1. Fla., Duclair 1 (Verhaeghe), 8:26. **Penalty**—White, FLA (Slashing), 5:01.

SECOND PERIOD: 2. Bos., Marchand 4 (McAvoy), 2:27 (pp). 3. Fla., Bennett 3 (Cousins, Verhaeghe), 18:52. **Penalties**—Bennett, FLA (Holding), 0:53. Lauko, BOS (Slashing), 4:33. Ekblad, FLA (High Sticking), 14:49.

THIRD PERIOD: 4. Bos., Bergeron 1 (Marchand, McAvoy), 4:33 (pp). 5. Fla., Reinhart 2 (Barkov, Tkachuk), 5:14 (pp). 6. Bos., Hall 5 (Coyle, Carlo), 9:16. **Penalties**—Ekblad, FLA (Tripping), 4:27. Lauko, BOS (Hooking), 4:39. Fla. bench, served by Cousins (Too Many Men on the Ice), 16:25.

OVERTIME: 7. Fla., Tkachuk 3, 6:05. **Penalties**—None.

SHOTS ON GOAL: Fla. 8-8-8-4–28. Bos. 9-18-16-4–47. Power-play conversions—Fla. 1 of 2. Bos. 2 of 5.

GOALIES: Fla., Bobrovsky 1-1-0 (47 shots-44 saves). Bos., Ullmark 3-2-0 (25-21). Att—17,850 (17,565). T—3:05.

Kraken 3, Avalanche 2

Seattle	0	2	1	–	3
Colorado	0	1	1	–	2

FIRST PERIOD—None. **Penalties**—J.Johnson, COL (Interference), 10:42; Schwartz, SEA (Tripping), 19:03.

SECOND PERIOD—1. Seattle, Geekie 2 (Schwartz, Wennberg), 6:35. 2. Colorado, MacKinnon 3 (Rantanen), 7:55. 3. Seattle, Kartye 1 (Borgen, Eberle), 9:59. **Penalties**—O'Connor, COL (Interference), 2:59; Tolvanen, SEA (Slashing), 18:50.

THIRD PERIOD—4. Seattle, Gourde 1 (Bjorkstrand, Soucy), 1:40. 5. Colorado, Rodrigues 1 (Toews, MacKinnon), 16:23. **Penalties**—None.

SHOTS ON GOAL—Seattle 15-6-7–28. Colorado 8-10-10–28. Power-play conversions—Seattle 0 of 2; Colorado 0 of 2.

GOALIES—Seattle, Grubauer 3-2-0 (28 shots-26 saves). Colorado, Georgiev 2-3-0 (28-25). A—18,143 (18,007). T—2:29.

NHL PLAYOFF SCHEDULE FIRST ROUND

WESTERN CONFERENCE

P1 Vegas vs. WC2 Winnipeg
Golden Knights lead series 3-1

Gm 1	Winnipeg 5, Vegas 1
Gm 2	Vegas 5, Winnipeg 2
Gm 3	Vegas 5, Winnipeg 4 (2OT)
Gm 4	Vegas 4, Winnipeg 2
Gm 5	Tonight at Vegas, 7
Gm 6	Saturday at Winn., TBD*
Gm 7	Monday at Vegas, TBD*

P2 Edmonton vs. P3 KINGS
Oilers lead series 3-2

Gm 1	KINGS 4, Edmonton 3 (OT)
Gm 2	Edmonton 4, KINGS 2
Gm 3	KINGS 3, Edmonton 2 (OT)
Gm 4	Edmonton 5, KINGS 4 (OT)
Gm 5	Edmonton 6, KINGS 3
Gm 6	Saturday at Kings, TBD
Gm 7	Monday at Edm., TBD*

C1 Colorado vs. WC1 Seattle
Kraken lead 3-2

Gm 1	Seattle 3, Colorado 1
Gm 2	Colorado 3, Seattle 2
Gm 3	Colorado 6, Seattle 4
Gm 4	Seattle 3, Colorado 2 (OT)
Gm 5	Seattle 3, Colorado 2
Gm 6	Friday at Seattle, 7
Gm 7	Sunday at Colorado, TBD*

C2 Dallas vs. C3 Minnesota
Stars lead series 3-2

Gm 1	Minnesota 3, Dallas 2 (2OT)
Gm 2	Dallas 7, Minnesota 3
Gm 3	Minnesota 5, Dallas 1
Gm 4	Dallas 3, Minnesota 2
Gm 5	Dallas 4, Minnesota 0
Gm 6	Friday at Minnesota, 6:30
Gm 7	Sunday at Dallas, TBD*

* if necessary

EASTERN CONFERENCE

A1 Boston vs. WC2 Florida
Bruins lead series 3-2

Gm 1	Boston 3, Florida 1
Gm 2	Florida 6, Boston 3
Gm 3	Boston 4, Florida 2
Gm 4	Boston 6, Florida 2
Gm 5	Florida 4, Boston 3 (OT)
Gm 6	Friday at Florida, 4:30
Gm 7	Sunday at Boston, TBD*

A2 Toronto vs. A3 Tampa Bay
Maple Leafs lead series 3-1

Gm 1	Tampa Bay 7, Toronto 3
Gm 2	Toronto 7, Tampa Bay 2
Gm 3	Toronto 4, T. Bay 3 (OT)
Gm 4	Toronto 5, T. Bay 4 (OT)
Gm 5	Tonight at Toronto, 4
Gm 6	Sat. at Tampa Bay, TBD*
Gm 7	Monday at Toronto, TBD*

M1 Carolina vs. WC1 Islanders
Hurricanes lead series 3-2

Gm 1	Carolina 2, Islanders 1
Gm 2	Carolina 4, Islanders 3 (OT)
Gm 3	Islanders 5, Carolina 1
Gm 4	Carolina 5, Islanders 2
Gm 5	Islanders 3, Carolina 2
Gm 6	Friday at New York, 4
Gm 7	Sunday at Carolina, TBD*

M2 New Jersey vs. M3 Rangers
Series tied 2-2

Gm 1	Rangers 5, New Jersey 1
Gm 2	Rangers 5, New Jersey 1
Gm 3	N. Jersey 2, Rangers 1 (OT)
Gm 4	New Jersey 3, Rangers 1
Gm 5	Tonight at New Jersey, 4:30
Gm 6	Saturday at N.Y., 5
Gm 7	Monday at N.J., TBD*

All times PDT, unless noted

SPORTS

Clippers need to blow it up and rebuild

BILL PLASCHKE

Tyronn Lue spoke for the frustration of Clipper Nation in Phoenix on Tuesday night when the coach bemoaned another lost season with his two biggest stars on the bench.

"It's always in the back of your mind ... 'What if?' " Lue said.

Except he was asking the wrong question.

It should be, "What now?"

And the answer should be, in the wake of the first-round loss to the Suns, the Clippers need to break up a one-two punch that continually has smacked them in the face.

Trade Paul George. Trade Kawhi Leonard. Heck, trade them both, pick up two reliable and available stars, and build on the sort of young and gutsy effort that was so impressive against the Suns.

Trade them even though you want to march a glittery band into the new arena in 2024. Trade them because fans are tired of all the injuries. They're sick of all the load management. New ticket holders for the new digs want new hope, and only an implosion of the current locker room will deliver that.

Granted, it could be impossible to trade them considering they both will make $45.6 million next season, both are in their 30s and both are plenty beat up.

If that's the case and you're really forced to run this nightmare back one more year, do not — do not! — give them the contract extension for which they are eligible. Don't even think about it. An extension for either simply would extend Clipper Nation's pain.

Yes, the Clippers are a championship team when George and Leonard play together, but they're rarely together. They were on the court for only 38 of the team's 87 games this season. Their 24-14 record during

[See **Plaschke,** B7]

NBA PLAYOFFS :: FIRST ROUND

MEMPHIS 116, LAKERS 99

LAKERS LEAD SERIES 3-2 | **GAME 6:** FRIDAY AT LAKERS, 7:30 P.M., SPECSN, ESPN

JUSTIN FORD Getty Images

JAREN JACKSON JR. of Memphis lets loose while LeBron James (6) and Anthony Davis look away. The Grizzlies had their home rocking in Game 5 and despite Davis' 31 points and 19 rebounds, James could not muster his magic of the Lakers' Game 4 overtime win.

IT'S NOT OVER TIME

James' tank and Lakers come up empty this time as rest beckons

DYLAN HERNÁNDEZ

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — LeBron James was spent.

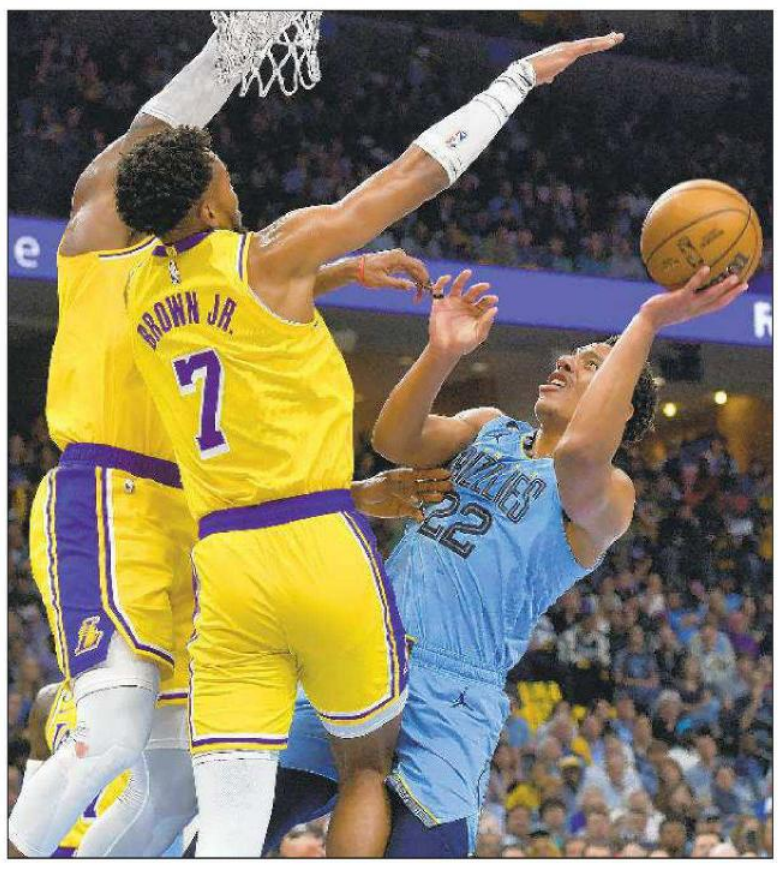
Removed from the court with about five minutes left in an eventual 116-99 defeat to the Memphis Grizzlies, James planted himself on the edge of the Lakers' bench at FedExForum.

His hands were clasped between his legs. His head was down.

The two nights that separated James from his most inspirational performance in a Lakers uniform wasn't sufficient time for him to recover, evidently.

James played on empty Wednesday night, making just five of 17 shots from the field, including one of nine three-pointers. He finished

[See **Hernández,** B6]



BRANDON DILL Associated Press

DESMOND BANE takes an awkward shot, but his 33 points in a team-high 43 minutes helped keep the Grizzlies' season alive.

No heroics from James as Grizzlies stay alive, send series back to L.A.

BY DAN WOIKE

MEMPHIS, Tenn.— LeBron James jogged backward, lips pursed after another jumper rattled in and then bounced out.

His expression went blank.

James and the Lakers were getting avalanched. A run to undo a 17-point deficit got them all the way within a point before the Memphis Grizzlies smothered them in a matter of possessions.

Memphis beat the Lakers 116-99 on its home floor Wednesday night in Game 5, extending the first-round NBA playoff series to a sixth game in Los Angeles on Friday night. Fans waved towels and chanted "Whoop that trick." Fans and arena staff loudly made plans for Sunday, when the Grizzlies potentially would host Game 7 if the Lakers can't end things.

[See **Lakers,** B6]

Dodgers call-up makes big impact

With Muncy on leave, Busch makes a good first impression

BY JACK HARRIS

PITTSBURGH — Three and a half hours before first pitch, Michael Busch gave himself a moment to take it all in.

The Dodgers rookie emerged from the PNC Park clubhouse Tuesday afternoon, climbed to the top of the stairs in the visitors dugout, then stopped and looked around at a quiet pregame scene — gazing out at a major league setting that, for the first time in his career, he'll get to call home for at least the next couple of days.

"It really hit me when I came out here and started taking some early work on the field," Busch said. "Seeing the stadium, seeing the city, just walking into the locker room ... it was pretty cool."

In the Dodgers' 8-7 win against the Pittsburgh Pirates, Busch made his debut as the club's designated hitter, collecting his first hit, walk and RBI less than four

[See **Dodgers,** B8]

JUSTIN K. ALLER Getty Images

MICHAEL BUSCH records his first major league hit in his debut Tuesday. Busch struggled at the plate Wednesday, going 0 for 4 with two strikeouts.

PITTSBURGH 8, DODGERS 1

Offense manages only four hits in blowout loss

Without three starters, Dodgers are no match for speedy, small-ball Pirates. **B8**

NFL DRAFT

FIRST ROUND: TONIGHT AT 5, CH. 7, ESPN, NFL

Quarterbacks' friendship forged long before fame

SAM FARMER
ON THE NFL

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Two of the top quarterback prospects in the NFL draft, Alabama's Bryce Young and Ohio State's C.J. Stroud, stood about 20 yards from each other Wednesday morning at the traditional meet-the-media session on a local high school field.

The longtime friends are expected to be chosen at or near the top of the first round Thursday, with Young probably going to the Carolina Panthers at No. 1 and Stroud almost surely to be selected in the No. 2 to No.7 range.

The locale is different — Kansas City is playing host to the nomadic draft for the first time — but the theme is familiar: Quarterbacks are in the spotlight, with other potential first-rounders including Florida's Anthony Richardson, Kentucky's Will Levis and Tennessee's Hendon Hooker.

Young and Stroud found fame in other parts of the country, but their football roots are in Southern California.

Young played at Cathedral High in Los Angeles and Mater Dei in Santa Ana; Stroud played at Rancho Cucamonga.

[See **Draft,** B10]

Rams have need at quarterback

With only Stafford, they must decide who and when make sense. **B10**

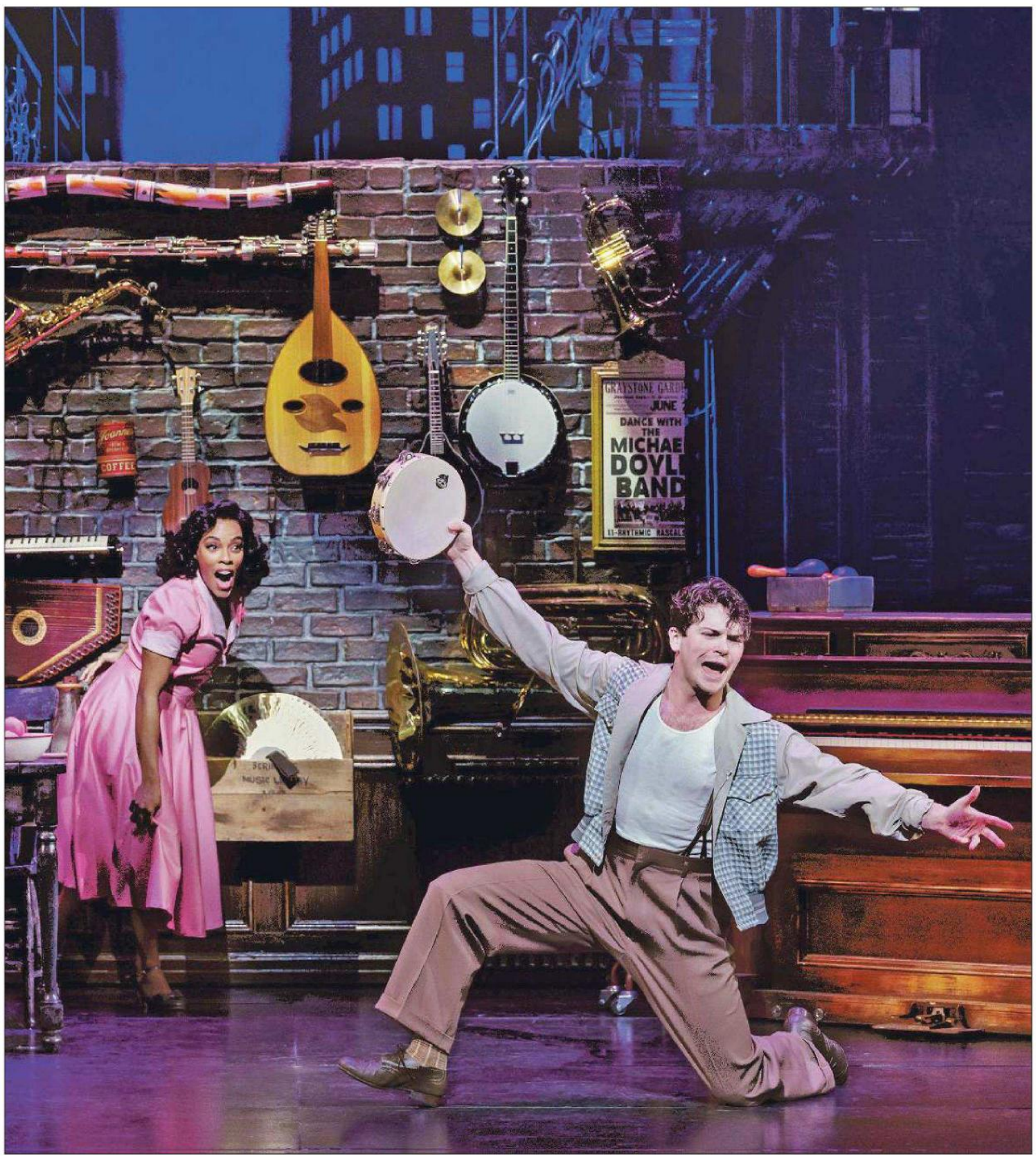
Chargers looking for help all over

GM Telesco says he hopes to draft depth on both sides of the ball. **B10**

Los Angeles Times

CALENDAR

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 2023 :: LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR



PAUL KOLNIK

ANNA UZELE stars as Francine Evans and Colton Ryan as Jimmy Doyle in the Broadway premiere of "New York, New York," a musical that turned out schlocky despite a John Kander and Fred Ebb score and additional lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda.

THEATER REVIEW

Big Apple gone bad

'New York, New York' the film is not good. The new Broadway musical is worse

BY CHARLES MCNULTY
THEATER CRITIC

NEW YORK — "New York, New York," a stage musical loosely based on Martin Scorsese's 1977 film starring Robert De Niro and Liza Minnelli, is the latest tourist shop to set up business in the theater district.

The show, which had its official Broadway opening Wednesday at the St. James Theatre, is meant to be a love letter to the city that never sleeps. Could that be why the musical is so exhausting?

The movie is unendurable in a different way. Scorsese focuses the camera on De Niro and Minnelli and lets them act in the hope that some semblance of character and story will eventually emerge. It's like a French New Wave film performed as a Method acting exercise, with musical interludes to alleviate the monotony.

Of course most people when they hear the title think of the movie's theme song, a Kander and Ebb classic written for Minnelli as the cinematic equivalent of an 11 o'clock [See **'New York,'** E2]

Return of the silver screen

At CinemaCon, stars and studios suggest streaming is out and theaters are back in.

BY ANOUSHA SAKOUI

LAS VEGAS — In case you haven't heard, cinema is back. That's the reverberating message out of CinemaCon, the annual convention for movie theater owners taking place in Las Vegas this week.

As studios including Warner Bros. and Sony Pictures previewed their upcoming films for 2023, it seemed as if any previous focus on shifting more movies to streaming was an aberration.

Warner Bros. Discovery Chief Executive David Zaslav paced the stage of the Caesars Palace Colosseum on Tuesday morning, doubling down on the studio's commitment to releasing movies exclusively in theaters before they appear on its streaming platform, Max, soon to be renamed from HBO Max.

"We believe in full windowing of the motion pictures," Zaslav said, music to the ears of the attending cinema operators from around the world.

"Windowing," in this case, refers to the weeks-long gap of time between a theatrical release and a movie's availability for home viewing, a key ingredient of theater owners' business model for decades.

That practice came [See **CinemaCon,** E6]

CHRIS PIZZELLO Invision / AP

OPRAH promoted her new "The Color Purple."

Unwelcome at Christmastime

A small village in Transylvania holds deep anti-immigrant sentiments in Cristian Mungiu's "R.M.N." **E3**

Comics **E4-5**
Puzzles **E4**

MOVIE REVIEW

'Margaret's' search for selfhood

Judy Blume's timeless youth novel emerges as a transcendent film full of great questions.

BY KATIE WALSH

What a wonder that the film adaptation of Judy Blume's beloved 1970 young adult novel "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret" is as lovely, heartfelt and, indeed, deeply radical as the original text. Blume long resisted granting permission for her work to be adapted to the screen, but when director Kelly Fremon Craig and producer James L. Brooks approached her about "Margaret," the 83-year-old author knew her storied work was in the right hands.

Fremon Craig proved her ability to capture the nuances of teenage life in "The [See **'Margaret,'** E6]

DANA HAWLEY Lionsgate

ABBY RYDER FORTSON, left, stars in "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret" with Amari Price, Elle Graham, Katherine Kupferer. The tween anxiety is real.

POP MUSIC REVIEW

They don't write 'em like that anymore

Jonas Brothers sing about fatherhood while their audience relives its youth.

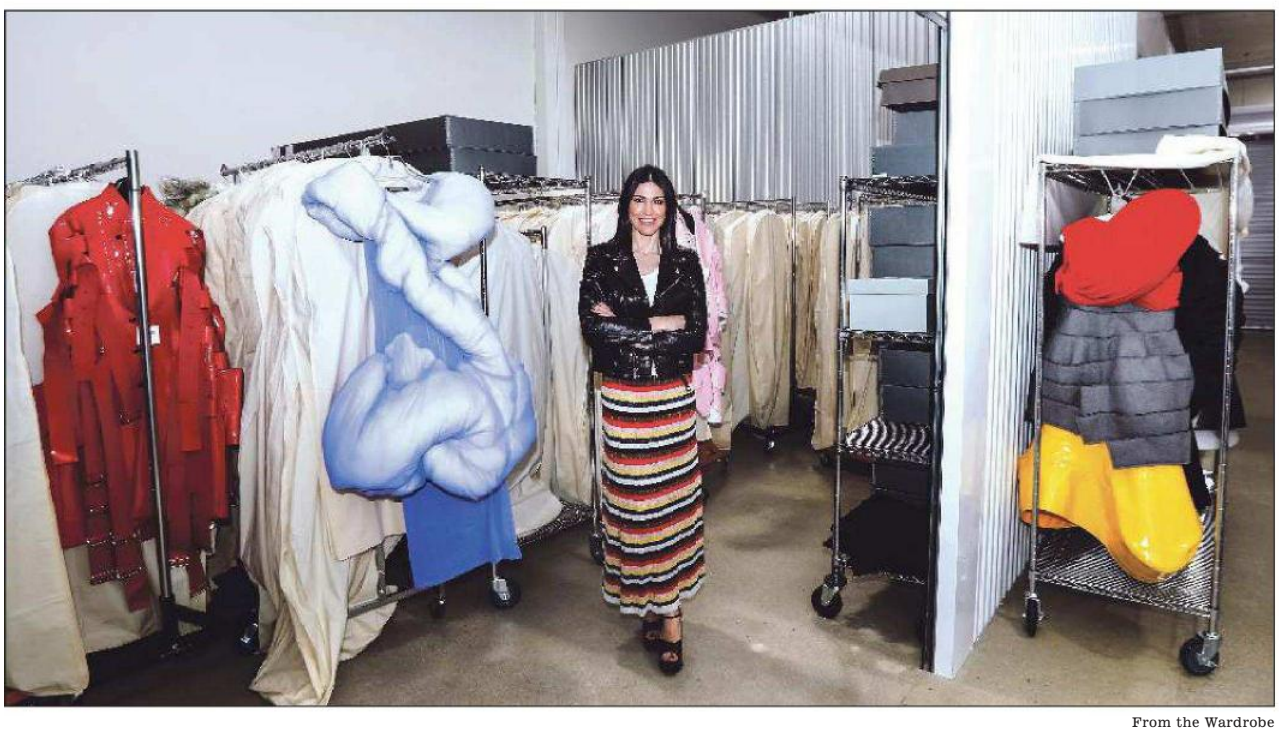
BY MARIA SHERMAN

At the pristinely restored Gothic theater in downtown's Ace Hotel, the Jonas Brothers emerged in impeccably tailored, loosely coordinated outfits (a gentle callback to their early '00s boy-band heartthrob days) and in front of a five-piece band and seven-member choir (a newfound maturation). Long gone are the days of Nick, Kevin and Joe's fringe haircuts and Disney Channel affiliations — this was an evening designed to introduce JoBro fans to their upcoming album, "The Album," which Nick, the youngest of the three at 30, described as being about "family, fatherhood and love" as he floated a kiss to his wife, actor Priyanka Chopra, in the balcony.

It was a far cry from the days when they proudly wore purity rings.

Tuesday's show was part of a series of "One Night Only" concerts in Los Angeles, Baltimore and Dallas. In L.A., 1,600 or so fans, primarily in their late 20s and early 30s and largely female, watched the trio perform nine tracks from the "The Album" plus 13 of their best-known songs, the latter accompanied by deafening screams.

In the 2000s, the Jonas Brothers expertly navigated a changing pop music landscape. The squeaky clean [See **Jonas,** E6]



From the Wardrobe

JULIE ANN CLAUSS founded the Wardrobe in New York and is establishing a West Coast facility in L.A.

Where fashion takes a rest

A storage and archive business provides glamorous items a place to hang out.

By Steven Vargas

At the end of the night when the models have finished walking the runway, the celebrities have headed home after strutting the award show's red carpet or the pop star's tour has come to an end, what happens to the wardrobe? The answer isn't always the same.

Sometimes a piece resurfaces for a new event. Sometimes it's never seen by the public again. But while the pieces that shape pop culture and the art of fashion may no longer be put to use, they are often put into storage. It sounds simple, but it involves more than just a plastic tub shoved in the back of your closet.

Julie Ann Clauss runs a solution to the dilemma: the Wardrobe. Founded in 2011 in New York, the archival service has launched a Los Angeles location in the last year to store fashion pieces like garments, bags, jewelry, ephemera, shoes and more for celebrities and fashion houses.

The facilities are hidden to protect their contents. Inside the temperature-controlled warehouse are rooms with large shelves that reach close to the ceiling. The bottom of the shelves contains racks where clothes hang — some concealed in bags and others peeking through with their vibrant colors and elaborate sleeves. Above the racks are shelves with boxes of more garments.

The quality of the conservation is museum-grade, all the way to its air filtration system. The West Coast location has slowly launched and is now up and running. Clauss envisioned the newly birthed location as a place for entertainers to conserve their wardrobes, especially as fashion becomes a central part of pop culture.

"Fashion is key to cultivating an entertainer's image," Clauss said. She pointed out that even Janis Joplin, a rock star whose image was counterculture with bohemian flair, had a stylist: Linda Gravenites. The stars we see today on stage and on the screen have a thoroughly executed image that needs a home once an era has been completed. This is where Clauss felt she could help.

Although Clauss has garnered plenty of popular clients like Calvin Klein, Marc Jacobs, Jason Wu and PVH with the Wardrobe, being an archivist wasn't always in her career plan. She began as a fashion journalist who dreamed of writing for Vogue. When the opportunity came for an interview, she ended up not being a good fit. She questioned, "What can I do to stand out?" That led her to a master's program in fashion and textiles studies at the Fashion Institute of Technology. She thought, "I'll be super well informed and will be a great writer."

While at FIT, Clauss gained the foundation of knowledge that would unknowingly lead her to archival work. She learned about fiber and textile science, how to care for clothes and how to mount an exhibition.

"I had to take college-level chemistry before I could get into the program, which, having been a writer, wasn't something I was really interested in doing," she said.

In 2004, Tom Ford left Gucci to start his own label. He later called FIT in search of an archivist, and the head of the program recommended Clauss.

"I wasn't really sure that I wanted that job, to be honest," she said. The prior archiving experience she had wasn't pleasurable. She recalled being stuck in a warehouse with no windows and the subtle aroma of urine. But she took on the job with Ford in 2008 and helped track down previous pieces he designed while at Gucci and archive it all under his brand. After about two years, she realized how important the work was.

"I thought, there have to be plenty of people in New York with beautiful clothes that they need help preparing for," she said.

AN IDEA BLOOMS

She decided to start her own business and asked Ford to be her first client. He agreed and still works with Clauss. The launch in 2011 coincided with Alexander McQueen's "Savage Beauty" show at the Met, a pivotal exhibition that emphasized archiving's importance by displaying everything from his 1992 postgraduate collection to his final runway show in 2010 shortly after his death.

"Designers started to really see, 'Oh, we should probably hang on to these archives rather than sampling them or giving them to friends,' " she said.

Clauss gained interest from entertainers in 2015, which she found exciting because she was particularly interested in the marriage of fashion, music and entertainment.

"I opened this building with the aim of expanding our base here and offering our services to more entertainers," she said.

Her soft launch of the Wardrobe's L.A. location is about eight months in the making, slowly moving West Coast clients' holdings from New York and accommodating the facilities for archiving.

The Wardrobe is utilized by those in the fashion industry and those who simply love fashion.

Designer and stylist Rachel Zoe has been collecting fashion pieces for about 20 years. The Wardrobe approached Zoe to potentially help preserve her collection.

"I put a lot of precious historical designer pieces that I don't necessarily wear that often, that I would never part with and really fear will get damaged over time," Zoe said.

These include vintage pieces by brands like Halston, Oscar de la Renta and Givenchy. Each has special value to Zoe.

"There's a uniqueness in historical pieces," she says. "I love knowing who they belong to. I love knowing what collection they're from. I love seeing them in fashion books." She adds, "I think knowing the history of a garment is all part of the process and the fun."

Angela Feiner, a Wardrobe client, found the archiving entity via Instagram and saw it as the perfect opportunity to store garments that are out of rotation, but only for the moment.

"I look at it as a piece of art that maybe isn't on my wall right now, but I'll have it for the future," Feiner says.

She recalls the dress she recently wore to her son's bar mitzvah and makes a mental note that she wouldn't be wearing it again soon, hinting at a possible addition to the Wardrobe.

"I have such regret when I look back at some of the pieces that I got rid of when I was younger," she says.

Holding her pieces with the Wardrobe gives her peace of mind, especially knowing Clauss is familiar with how to care for them.

Clauss' process involves, first, securing each piece. For designers, that means getting pieces back from showrooms or working with PR representatives to track the piece's location. For entertainers, it means sifting through tour apparel and wardrobe to decide which pieces and ephemera need to be stored. Second, Clauss evaluates whether pieces need repairs or simply need to be cleaned. Then she documents it all with photos, recordings and images of its use on stage or the red carpet. Lastly, Clauss evaluates storage requirements.

She establishes if it needs to be hung and with what hanger, "thinking about how something needs to be supported as if it were on a body," she said.

She looks at the shoulders to gauge padding. She thinks about the length of the hanger and the clearance from the hook. As she "gets sciency," she discussed the use of clear hangers made of a proprietary blend that doesn't release gasses that could discolor a garment or leach chemicals. Sometimes, hangers aren't enough and the piece needs to be professionally mounted on a re-creation of the client's body. Other times, garments are packed into a box with tissue padding, upholding a familiar shape of the body without it being pressed against other garments.

USES OF AN ARCHIVE

Her clients have used the archives to dress movies, red carpets and retail activations. It's everywhere. That's the beauty of fashion.

"I think fashion is a lot less intimidating than fine art," Clauss said. "Everybody interacts with fashion in their everyday lives."

She contemplated her own explorations with fashion growing up, leaning toward the classic rock looks, like Joplin. Fashion is more than the runways for Clauss, it's a form of self-expression. She gravitated toward vintage, a trend that is rising with younger generations as the internet opens catalogs of fashion. The trend is also seeping into fashion houses.

"Certain brands are starting to sell archival pieces," she said, pointing to Oscar de la Renta's Encore as an example. "It underscores the importance of quality in fashion and not investing in throw-away pieces that are polluting the planet."

Anna Wintour preached the power of vintage and passing on clothes. The mentality shift has proven Clauss' business venture important to the fashion industry.

Clauss, who once yearned to work for Vogue, is now in the headlines of Vogue for her archival work. As her business in L.A. grows, she hopes to help entertainers leverage their collections and preserve the historical moments by caring for them on the shelves of the Wardrobe and preparing for the next time they are worn in front of fans.

"There is tremendous value in it, and I'd love to see the building filled with incredible tour fashion," she said.

As busy as a subway

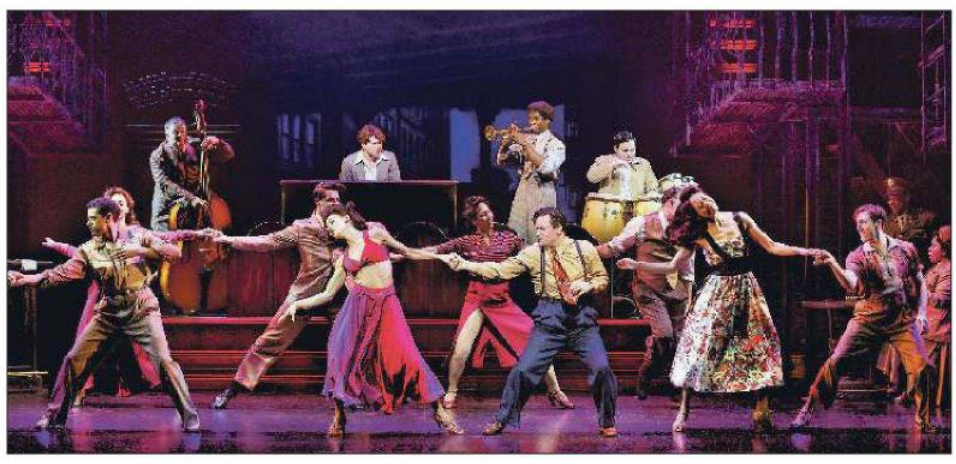
['New York,' from E1]

number. Frank Sinatra later turned this ditty into the city's anthem — making it inescapable for Kander, who still doesn't get why everyone loves it so much.

The song — which is teased at various points in the show — is given quite the liftoff at the end. Director and choreographer Susan Stroman, a five-time Tony Award winner, pulls out all the stops in a finale that has the band rising from the pit on what looks like a giant Santa Claus sled. The audience drools on Pavlovian reflex. But it's an orgasm that takes so long to achieve that many theatergoers will be sleepwalking through it.

Composer John Kander and lyricist Fred Ebb, the storied Broadway songwriting duo behind such shows as "Cabaret" and "Chicago," wrote a handful of songs for the film, including "But the World Goes 'Round." Kander is still going strong at 96, but Ebb died in 2004, leaving Kander to furnish the musical with a score from many sources. There are songs Kander wrote by himself, trunk songs from the Kander and Ebb catalog and new tunes that Kander collaborated on with Lin-Manuel Miranda serving as lyricist.

The show is so awash in music that I felt as if I were bobbing in a sea of redundant Broadway refrains. The numbers are protracted by Stroman's strenuously energetic choreography, which seems to give every dance sequence the hard sell in triplicate. When imagination fails her, she has an ensemble member twirl from one end of the stage to the other. Indeed, there's so much twirling that the producers might consider a program insert warning theatergoers about the possibility of vertigo.



Paul Kolnik

CHOREOGRAPHY by Susan Stroman is full of redundant Broadway refrains.

But it's not fair to pin the blame on Stroman, who is merely trying to cover up the emptiness at the heart of the musical. The book written by David Thompson with Sharon Washington maintains the film's immediate post-World War II jubilance but jettisons much of the plot that was specific to De Niro and Minnelli. What's left is a void of good intentions.

The stage version is more inclusive of New York humanity, but the story still isn't adequately fleshed out. In a series of scenarios that might easily be mistaken as a pretext for musical variety, the characters are defined not so much by their personalities but by their professional aspirations and demographics.

In the movie, De Niro and Minnelli are observed under the emotional magnifying glass of the camera. In the musical, Colton Ryan and Anna Uzele, too busy singing and dancing, haven't the time or the breath to bother with subtext.

Ryan plays Jimmy Doyle, a jazz musician of Irish background who's mourning the death of his brother in the war. He drinks to deal with his grief and when he drinks he gets into fights. But he's not as emotionally twisted and manipulative as De Niro's version of the character.

Uzele plays Francine Evans, a Black chanteuse with an almighty voice who has been entertaining with the USO and now is looking for work in New York. Practical-minded and clear-eyed, she knows the racist obstacles she faces on the path to stardom.

Ryan is the piano player at an audition for a job that Francine doesn't get. ("Come back when you're a blond," she's told.) He's awestruck by her talent and furious at the manager for not hiring her on the spot. He quits and when they're both outside asks her out to dinner.

The invitation is instantly rebuffed. "For starters, you're — Irish. No offense. No Irish. Your people and my people? Oil and water," she explains.

Jimmy's buddy Tommy Caggiano (Clyde Alves) takes it from there: "Listen, New York City is the greatest social experiment ever. Everybody lives here. And everybody's natural enemy lives here. And we manage not to kill each other. For the most part."

An interracial relationship is born — no matter that the characters don't have much in common beyond their love of music. It wasn't always clear what Jimmy and Francine saw in each other in the movie. Here, the characters are more sympathetic. But the lack of genuine chemistry makes it hard to invest in a love affair that seems more or less random.

The way Miranda romanticizes Washington Heights in his Tony-winning musical "In the Heights" is nothing compared to the way "New York, New York" sentimentalizes the entire island of Manhattan. This is a postcard view of the melting pot, scrubbed of historical specifics.

The other characters are treated as types. There's Alex Mann (Oliver Prose), a young violin-obsessed European refugee who wants to take lessons from the once-renowned Madame Veltri (Emily Skinner). Mateo Diaz (Angel Sigala), a young Cuban drummer, chases his musical dream in the hope of rescuing his abused mother. Jesse Webb (John Clay III), a Black trumpeter who fought in war but is now stuck working in a kitchen, is determined to test this new era of American possibility.

What unites this group is a passion for music, a desire for money and a longing for love, a set of aspirations that are laid out in the number "Major Chord." Hitting the jackpot with all three might seem too much to ask, but Jimmy is determined to have it all. (No matter how long he may have to filibuster about it in song.)

Ryan's Jimmy sings in a caricatured big-band style that's like Bing Crosby with marbles in his mouth. Uzele's Francine makes every song a somewhat monotonous Broadway showstopper. I found myself rooting for their romance, but it's hard to lose sight of the performers when their characters are no more than fig leaves.

The production design turns the stage into a storybook version of New York, where tenement fire escapes provide an ideal perch for marveling at urban sunsets. The fake poetry of it all becomes cloying, even for a native New Yorker who has sentimental leanings in this direction.

Stroman works hard to seduce us. She's trying to solve dramatic problems with propulsive tableaux. But song and story are only tenuously tethered. As a result, the Broadway showmanship grows wearing.

In "Wine and Peaches," company members are tapdancing perilously on a skyscraper construction site. The choreography is breathtaking, but the number seems airlifted from another New York revue. Tourists may be wowed, but they deserve more integrated artistry from Broadway.

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ROYAL — 11523 Santa Monica Blvd. — West L.A.
CENTURION: THE DANCING STALLION PG 3:00 PM
CARMEN R 1:00 7:00
EVERYTHING WENT FINE 4:20 PM
THE HAPPIEST MAN NR 7:00 PM
JUDY BLUME FOREVER 1:30 4:30 7:30
SHORT FILM PROGRAM NR 1:00 PM
SNOW AND THE BEAR 5:00 PM

MONICA — 1332 Second Street — Santa Monica
BEAU IS AFRAID R 12:50 3:45 7:10
CHEVALIER PG-13 1:30 4:20 7:10
WILD LIFE PG-13 1:10 4:30 5:15 7:30
HOW TO BLOW UP A PIPELINE R 4:10 PM
SHOWING UP R 1:20 7:20
AIR R 1:10 4:00 7:00
DOSED: THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME 1:00 3:10 7:30

TOWN CENTER — 17200 Ventura Blvd. — Encino
CHEVALIER PG-13 1:20 4:20 7:20
SOMEWHERE IN QUEENS R 1:00 4:00 7:00
EVERYTHING WENT FINE 1:10 7:00
MAFIA MAMMA R 1:30 4:30 7:30
HOW TO BLOW UP A PIPELINE R 4:00 PM
AIR R 1:00 4:10 7:10

NEWHALL — 22500 Lyons Ave. — Santa Clarita
BEAU IS AFRAID R 12:50 7:10
CHEVALIER PG-13 1:10 4:10 7:20
EVIL DEAD RISE R 1:30 4:20 7:00
EVERYTHING WENT FINE 7:00 PM
MAFIA MAMMA R 4:35 PM
THE POPE'S EXORCIST R 1:20 4:00
RENFIELD R 12:55 3:10 5:25 7:40
AIR R 1:20 4:10 7:20
THE SUPER MARIO BROS. MOVIE PG 12:50 3:00 5:15 7:30

GLENDALE — 207 N. Maryland Ave — Glendale
BEAU IS AFRAID R 12:50 3:50 7:10
THE BEST MAN R 1:30 PM
BLIND WILLOW, SLEEPING WOMAN 4:10 PM
RENFIELD R 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:40
HOW TO BLOW UP A PIPELINE R 4:30 7:20
SHOWING UP R 1:10 4:35 7:35
TOMMY GUNS 1:10 7:00

NoHo 7 — 5240 Lankershim Blvd. — No. Hollywood
BEAU IS AFRAID R 12:50 3:50 7:10
CADEJO BLANCO 1:10 4:10 7:10
TO CATCH A KILLER R 1:20 4:30 7:20
MAFIA MAMMA R 4:40 PM
RENFIELD R 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35
HOW TO BLOW UP A PIPELINE R 1:10 7:40
AIR R 1:20 4:10 7:00
THE SUPER MARIO BROS. MOVIE PG 12:55 3:10 5:25 7:40

CLAREMONT — 450 W. 2nd Street — Claremont
SPIRITED AWAY: LIVE ON STAGE - STUDIO GHIBLI FEST 2023 PG 7:00 PM
BEAU IS AFRAID R 12:50 3:45 7:10
MAFIA MAMMA R 4:40 PM
RENFIELD R 12:50 3:05 5:20 7:35
HOW TO BLOW UP A PIPELINE R 1:10 7:30
AIR R 7:20 PM
AIR R 1:20 4:20
THE SUPER MARIO BROS. MOVIE PG 12:55 3:10 5:25 7:40

BARGAIN IN ( ) CC CLOSED CAPTION NSP NON-STANDARD PRICING FOR 4/27/2023 ONLY

MOVIE REVIEW

A nativistic take on Nativity story

'R.M.N.' is a must-see slow-burn drama about racism in a Transylvanian village.

JUSTIN CHANG
FILM CRITIC

Mobra Films

MARIN GRIGORE, center, Judith State and Orsolya Moldován, right, play complex characters in "R.M.N."

If "R.M.N." had been released in American theaters at the end of last year, it would have made for a sensational piece of seasonal counterprogramming.

A riveting downer from the gifted Romanian writer-director Cristian Mungiu, the movie begins a few days before Christmas, when a man named Matthias (Marin Grigore), taking a break from his job slicing open carcasses in a German slaughterhouse, gets called a "lazy gypsy" and throws an instinctive, ill-advised punch. Casting a nervous glance behind him, he quickly leaves and hitchhikes his way home to his small Transylvanian village, eager to reunite with his emotionally troubled 8-year-old son, Rudi (Mark Blenyesi), and maybe rekindle a flame with an old girlfriend, Csilla (Judith State).

If that doesn't sound like the coziest of holiday reunions, Mungiu is just getting warmed up, or rather cooled down. Not long after Matthias returns, three weary migrants from Sri Lanka — their names are Mahinda (Amitha Jayasinghe), Alick (Gihan Edirisinghe) and Rauff (Nuwan Karunarathna) — also arrive in town, seeking rest, shelter and honest employment. It's not exactly subtle as biblical metaphors go, but Mungiu knows that bluntness can have its uses. Arriving in a season that promises goodwill toward men, the migrants are instead greeted with suspicion and paranoia, pelted with insults and even a Molotov cocktail.

"R.M.N." isn't a Nativity story; it's a nativism story, a roving panorama of small-town hostility and a microcosm of tribalist enclaves the world over. It's also a mystery, one that begins and ends in confusion, and something of a romance, thanks to the intriguingly if befuddlingly mismatched Matthias and Csilla. Matthias is a boor and a bully, gruff with his estranged wife, Ana (Macrina Barladeanu), and eager to mold the sensitive young Rudi into a model of chest-beating manhood. Csilla, by contrast, is liberal, cultured and successful; she runs the village bakery where Mahinda, Alick and Rauff have come to work, and she treats them with a warmth and respect they seldom experience elsewhere.

But if Csilla serves as the story's sympathetic point of entry, Mungiu is too rigorous and clear-eyed a storyteller to sugarcoat her complicity. She and her boss (Orsolya Moldován) are adding workers so their bakery can qualify for special European Union funds, and since none of the locals will accept a minimum-wage job, especially right before Christmas, cheap workers from overseas are an obvious solution. One of the ironies of "R.M.N.," and of the globalized labor market we can hear grinding away off-screen, is that the town itself is in thrall to the same cruel economic logic. Thanks to the recent closure of a local mine, many former residents have left to take jobs outside Romania; some of them, like Matthias, have surely been subjected to their own racist taunts abroad.

Not that Matthias has been in any way enlightened by his own experience of xenophobia. Really, xenophobia has always been all around him — as much a fixture of the scenic Transylvanian landscape as the gnarled trees and gray skies we see in Tudor Vladimir Panduru's beautifully composed widescreen images, and as much a tradition as the parade of bear-costumed revelers we see during some local holiday festivities. The villagers are loosely divided into Romanian, Hungarian and German factions that have long dwelt together in uneasy tension — a tension that Mungiu captures by having his characters speak and shuttle between various languages, delineated by color-coded subtitles.

For those whose ears are untrained in the differences in language, this polyglot approach can be initially overwhelming, even confusing. (The confusion is partly the point.) At the same time, Mungiu is a master of the long, talky slow burn, and if "R.M.N." often feels less focused and more sprawling than some of his earlier movies ("4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days," "Graduation"), that's a testament to its expansiveness and ambition. The story becomes increasingly gripping as it meanders and lingers, broadens and deepens, putting peripheral characters into play and bringing latent hostilities to the surface. Mungiu wants to steep us in the day-to-day realities of contemporary Transylvania, a region whose multiethnic population speaks to a contentious history and a still-contested present.

'R.M.N.'

In Romanian, Hungarian, German and English with English subtitles
Not rated
Running time: 2 hours, 8 minutes
Playing: Starts Friday at Laemmle Royal, West Los Angeles

He's also setting the stage for his most calculated masterstroke, an extraordinarily orchestrated 15-minute town-hall sequence in which the migrants become an all-too-useful scapegoat, a common enemy against which to unite. But differences of race, culture and language are hardly the only barriers in effect; religion is surely another. Given the way a pastor chooses to respond after his parishioners slam the door in Alick's face, Mungiu may take an even dimmer view of the church here than he did in "Beyond the Hills," his drama about an exorcism gone foolishly wrong. Class and gender play their roles, too, as "R.M.N." reminds you whenever it cuts back to Csilla, with her beauty and relative wealth, her lovely, well-appointed house and her appreciation of life's finer pleasures.

In her spare time, Csilla nurses a glass of red wine and plays the cello with a string sextet; one piece she keeps practicing on her own is "Yumeji's Theme," which some in the audience will recognize from Wong Kar-wai's magnificent art-house romance "In the Mood for Love." There's something cruelly, incongruously funny about the piece every time you hear it; Mungiu's somber realism, leached of bright colors and nondiegetic music, feels worlds away from Wong's hot-hued aesthetics of desire, and Matthias and Csilla, alternating between hot sex and chilly rebuffs, are not exactly candidates for romantic transcendence.

But then, they have other things on their mind: Before long the racist townsfolk, no longer in the mood for loaves, are boycotting the bakery's wares and accusing the migrant workers of bringing foreign diseases. "R.M.N." warns of deeper, more troubling maladies. The title acronym translates as "nuclear magnetic resonance," the meaning of which becomes clear when an important peripheral character undergoes a brain scan, with none-too-promising results.

Mungiu's own laserlike diagnosis of the collective human condition is scarcely more optimistic. At the end of this compassionate yet withering indictment of a movie, he pulls the plug with a loud bang, a surreal flourish and a sense of gathering unease. Having already supplied no shortage of things to talk about, Mungiu means to send you out into the theater lobby with one more mystery to unravel. Or perhaps conventional words, images and resolutions have simply failed him, as if the evils of this town, and of the world, had finally coalesced, or metastasized, into something too awful to bear.

Music Box Films

VIRGINIE EFIRA, left, Roschdy Zem and child actor Callie Ferreira-Goncalves.

Joys and pains of raising a kid

Virginie Efira shines in the fifth feature from French writer-director Rebecca Zlotowski.

JUSTIN CHANG
FILM CRITIC

'Other People's Children'

In French with English subtitles
Not rated
Running time: 1 hour, 45 minutes
Playing: Starts Friday at Laemmle Royal, West Los Angeles

The superb French drama "Other People's Children" opens on the Eiffel Tower at night — a timeless romantic image that floods you with warmth and maybe induces a chuckle. It's a cliché, *oui*, but a wittily, knowingly deployed one. The tower's famous beacon shimmers across the famous city that's home to our radiantly beautiful 40-year-old heroine, Rachel (Virginie Efira), who makes her way through a busy, fulfilling life that plays, at first, like dreamiest fantasy. With deft, flowing camerawork and a burst of Vivaldi, the opening sequence finds Rachel teaching high-school students and chattering with colleagues, whisks her off on a quick car ride with a friendly ex, deposits her at an evening guitar class and ends with a drink and a tender smooch under the stars.

The passionate lovemaking that follows marks both a culmination and a beginning. Rachel's lover is Ali (Roschdy Zem), a divorced industrial designer with a 4-year-old daughter, Leila (Callie Ferreira-Goncalves), whom he's raising jointly with her mother, Alice (Chiara Mastroianni). It'll be some time before Rachel meets Leila, a moment she eagerly anticipates but allows Ali to arrange only when he's ready. Rachel is considerate and attentive to Ali's needs, slotting herself in and out of his life at his convenience. That remains the case when Rachel starts spending more and more time with Leila, looking after the child when Ali's away, picking her up at judo lessons and forging a bond as intense as it is ultimately fragile.

Unlike a lot of movie moppets, Leila is neither protagonist nor prop. As played by Ferreira-Goncalves, she's a recognizably real kid, meaning she's adorable, yes, and also shy, irritable, sweet, wary and unruly, with a love of sweets, a fondness for hugs and a tendency toward motion sickness. We see her only when Rachel sees her — a choice that underscores the tricky, conditional nature of a relationship that resists tidy labels.

Crucially, the writer-director Rebecca Zlotowski proves similarly unwilling to reduce Leila to an easy role or function; this child is neither the glue that holds Rachel and Ali together nor the wedge that drives them apart — not even when Leila inconveniently bursts into her father's bedroom one night, sending a naked Rachel out onto the balcony. It's a hilarious *coitus interruptus* sight gag with a hint of dramatic foreshadowing: Before long, Rachel's connection with Leila will bloom into its own thorny, lovely and unpredictable thing, one that might even outlast the romance that breathed it into being.

Partly drawn from Zlotowski's own personal experience, "Other People's Children" sneaks up on you, with a depth and complexity of feeling that throws those glossy, idyllic opening moments into bittersweet relief. It is, like some of the filmmaker's earlier movies ("Grand Central," "An Easy Girl"), a story of unarticulated tensions and inconvenient desires, and it treats smart, self-aware, complicated female characters not as an accomplishment but as a given. Ali's focus may be divided among the women in his life ("my ladies," he calls them affectionately), but the movie grants all its time and attention to Rachel, whom Zlotowski and Efira reveal bit by bit, scene by scene.

Unfolding piecemeal in episodes that Zlotowski begins and ends with playfully old-fashioned iris shots, the story follows Rachel everywhere: to synagogue services with her father (Michel Zlotowski, the director's dad), and to the grave of her mother, who died when Rachel was just a child. It drops in on an appointment with her gynecologist, played, in a dryly funny turn, by the great documentary filmmaker Frederick Wiseman — a whimsical touch that nicely encapsulates the movie's dexterous interplay of realism and fantasy.

We see Rachel at her school, where she registers but gently deflects the flirtations of a young colleague (Henri-Noël Tabary) and goes out of her way to help an at-risk student, Dylan (Victor Lefebvre), who she knows is more than the sum of his truancies. Dylan, of course, adds a layer of meaning to the movie's perfectly chosen title. So does Rachel's younger sister (Yamée Couture), who learns she's pregnant at more or less precisely the moment that Rachel considers having a baby of her own.

If that sounds like a pat irony on paper, it doesn't play that way onscreen, in part because Zlotowski, taking her cues from her heroine, belabors nothing. Setbacks arise and plans fail, but Rachel, who's seen triumph and tragedy, fulfillment and disappointment, knows something about taking the worst in stride. You sense this in her brusque dismissal of a disappointing home pregnancy test, and also in her swift, decisive departure from Ali's apartment when she overhears young Leila saying that she wishes Rachel would go away. And yet Rachel also knows when to linger and give full expression to her emotions, whether she's speaking out during a faculty meeting or greeting her baby niece for the first time — an overwhelming moment in which joy, grief and awe are irreducibly commingled.

Efira, a César-winning Belgian French actor of luminous presence and quietly limitless range, has been a sterling fixture of European cinema for years now. She's best known in the U.S. for the comic thriller "Sibyl" and the lesbian-nun potboiler "Benedetta," two very different movies in which she plays women fully alive to the world and eager to forge their own destinies, in part by studying and testing the limits of their desires. Rachel may be a more realistically grounded creation, but even here Efira does something similar: With a poise and control that can give way to sudden riptides of feeling, she shows us a woman doing nothing more or less profound than try to figure herself out, to make sense of the world and her place in it.

That determination speaks to the forthright feminism of Zlotowski's storytelling, which manifests itself in a hundred different ways. It's there in the seemingly throwaway moment when the camera, mirroring Rachel's morning-after gaze, steals an appreciative glance at Ali's backside in the shower. (The ever-alert cinematography is by George Lechaptois.) It's there in the movie's steadfast refusal to pit its heroine or the audience against Ali's ex, Alice; in a story consciously devoid of villains, she turns out to be as unassuming, reasonable and wholly sympathetic as Rachel is.

Most of all, perhaps, it's there in Rachel's expressed longing for the pleasures of romance and the satisfactions of motherhood, but also her understanding that said longings, whether fulfilled or not, needn't define or, in the end, constrain her. This deeply, stealthily affecting movie doesn't constrain her, either. It concludes not with the Eiffel Tower but with a more personal kind of landmark, namely the hard-won sense that every difficult ending can also be an occasion for renewal.

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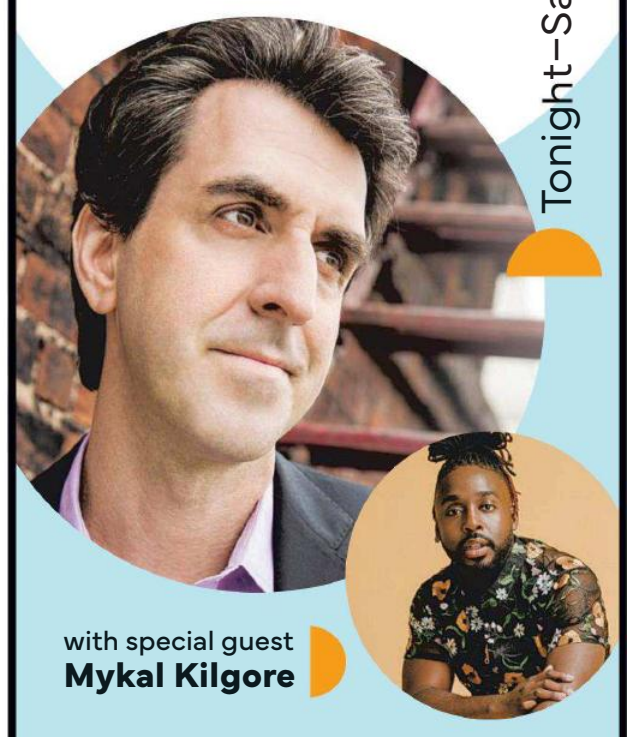
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COMICS

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1	4	5	2	6	3

4/27/23

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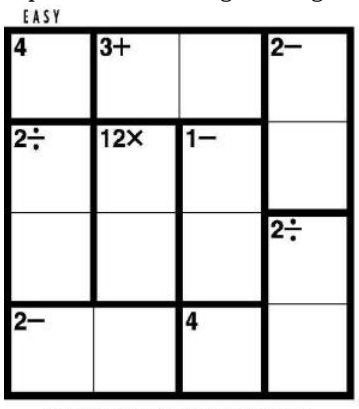
Solutions to Wednesday's puzzles

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 or 2-by-3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 6 for the smaller grid). For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit *www.sudoku.org.uk*.

KENKEN

Every box will contain a number; numbers depend on the size of the grid. For a 6x6 puzzle, use Nos. 1-6. Do not repeat a number in any row or column. The numbers in each heavily outlined set of squares must combine to produce the target number found in the top left corner of the cage using the mathematical operation indicated. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row or column.

EASY



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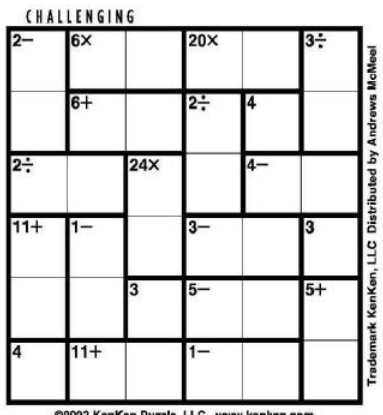
CHALLENGING



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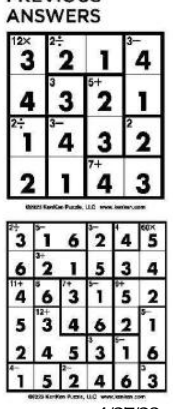
PREVIOUS ANSWERS



4/27/23

HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis

Aries (March 21-April 19): You'd be wise to analyze any commands, requests or instructions issued in your direction today.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): To know how an idea stands up to reality, it must first be acted upon, built and brought into practical form.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): It is wasteful to toil for people who don't compensate you for your work. Money is not the only compensation, but some fair exchange should occur because people don't value the work they don't pay for.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): You'll get the chance to be a detective. You'll enjoy the satisfaction of figuring out what actually happened.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): Your story can't inspire other people if you don't tell it. Even so, there are more and less effective ways to tell this one.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Let go of past mistakes. Think only of how you want to approach today.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): It will be challenging to stay present in the discussion but when your mind races to what you might say next, don't be afraid to mention it.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): The first step to getting to the root of a thing will be to drop the assumption that you already know it.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): You have options but you don't know what many of them are yet. Start asking around; when you don't get information, you'll get social connection.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You may be reserved in public, but you sing loud when you're alone in the car. Someone will rouse that freer side of you today.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): You show restraint, but only to those who are seasoned enough to recognize it.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): You'll get further by thinking less. You'll follow your heart's impulses before you even realize what they are.

Today's birthday (April 27): This year comes to you like a fresh breath of vitality. You'll hone your unique definition of the good life and live it fully. You prize efficiency — a value that will reap many rewards from focusing on what matters, reducing waste and maximizing the resources you're given. More highlights: new friends, vicariously hearing your praises sung and an adventure your younger self wouldn't have believed. Libra and Aquarius adore you. Your lucky numbers: 5, 9, 1, 37 and 16.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol and Joyce Nichols Lewis

By Lance Enfinger and Jeff Chen

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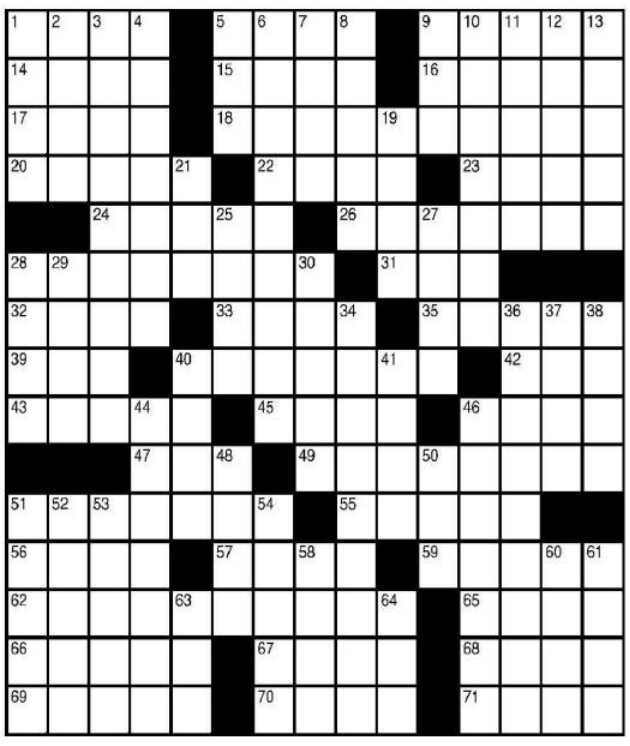


ACROSS

1 Cracked
5 Actor Omar
9 Dull sound
14 Easy going?
15 Pharmacist's container
16 Ancient region of modern Turkey
17 Range for Zermatt and the Matter Valley
18 Honors course for an aspiring aircraft marshaller?
20 Get down to basics
22 Consumes
23 Red carpet stance
24 Irish actor Chris of TV's "Get Shorty"
26 Shenanigans
28 Dust jacket design
31 Bowling pin count
32 Bird mascot for the Miami Hurricanes
33 New Zealand parrots
35 Ray's relative
39 Tanqueray liquor
40 Georgia fruit
42 Hoppin' John morsel
43 George of "The Goldbergs"
45 Word with ring or music
46 Relaxation stations
47 Claire of "The Crown"
49 Fleetest of foot
51 Brandy glass
55 Penta- minus one
56 Goddess who is the mother of Apollo and Artemis
57 Protein option for pho
59 Olympic volleyball great Kerri __ Jennings
62 Honors course for an aspiring pastor?
65 Totenberg of NPR
66 Barbecue sites
67 Creative flash
68 Tiny annoyance
69 Splash through puddles
70 Prying
71 Meringue need

DOWN

1 Quaint plaint
2 Shock
3 Honors course for an aspiring lawyer?
4 Lives
5 Perón of Argentina
6 Out-of-reach goal
7 __ Smurf
8 Arboreal slowpoke
9 Metal in pewter
10 Bright lipstick shade
11 Gabrielle of "L.A.'s Finest"
12 Capital of Belarus
13 Audiobook's lack
19 "You think so?"
21 __ ejemplo
25 Waves from a boat
27 Milo's "Gilmore Girls" role
28 Slangy smokes
29 Big Apple stage award
30 Tuesday fare
34 Many entries in the Great American Songbook
36 Honors course for an aspiring bell ringer?
37 Dim sum brews
38 All-Star side
40 Storyline
41 Falco of "Nurse Jackie"
44 Provides, as an opportunity
46 Idiosyncratic
48 Creature in Tibetan myth
50 "Woo-hoo!," in textspeak
51 Leaves rolling in the aisles
52 Place to spot a 48-Down, maybe
53 Staffer who's good at networking, for short
54 Pitcher's gripping aid
58 Everymutt
60 Obstacle
61 Bowlers, e.g.
63 Fire pit residue
64 Carefree

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

M	A	H	A	L	■	E	N	D	O	W	■	S	I	P
A	G	A	V	E	■	X	E	N	I	A	■	E	G	O
J	A	N	E	G	O	O	D	A	L	L	■	R	U	N
■	■	G	O	U	R	D	■	■	■	T	R	E	A	D
R	A	W	■	P	A	U	L	C	E	Z	A	N	N	E
E	V	I	L	■	■	S	O	U	P	■	P	E	A	R
F	E	T	E	S	■	■	G	R	I	S	T	■	■	■
■	C	H	A	R	L	E	S	S	C	H	U	L	Z	■
■	■	P	I	A	N	O	■	■	■	A	R	O	A	R
S	K	A	T	■	D	O	U	R	■	■	E	Z	R	A
H	O	W	A	R	D	S	T	E	R	N	■	E	A	T
I	R	A	T	E	■	■	■	S	A	B	A	N	■	■
P	E	R	■	G	A	M	E	C	H	A	N	G	E	R
T	A	D	■	A	D	I	E	U	■	E	N	E	R	O
O	N	S	■	L	O	D	G	E	■	R	E	S	E	T

4/27/23

BRIDGE

By Frank Stewart

Cy the Cynic says that at today's prices at the pump, a journey of 1,000 miles costs too much for gas. A journey of 13 tricks may not even leave home if you play hastily to the first trick.

Today's North-South bid questionably; South might have tried 3NT over two clubs. Against four spades, West led the king of hearts, and South took the ace, ruffed a heart in dummy and came back to the jack of clubs and ace of diamonds to ruff two more hearts.

South had won the first six tricks, but when he led a high club next, East ruffed, led a diamond to West, ruffed another club and took his ace of trumps. Down one.

South has 10 winners — three trumps, five clubs and two red aces — without ruffing any hearts in dummy. He succeeds if he can maintain trump control so he can take his winners. South must let West's king of hearts win. If West leads another heart, South ruffs in dummy and loses to the ace of trumps. He can win any return, draw trumps and take his 11 tricks.

You hold: ♠ 3 2 ♥ K Q 10 ♦ K 10 8 4 ♣ 9 8 4 2. The dealer, at your left, opens one heart. Your partner doubles, you respond ("advance") 1NT and your partner bids two spades. What do you say?

Answer: Your partner has a good hand; with a fair hand and a spade suit, he would have overcalled one spade. Partner expects you to bid again. Since you had a sound hand for your 1NT, bid three diamonds to show strength in that suit. Partner should take it from there.

North dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH
♠ K 9 4
♥ 6
♦ 7 6 5 3
♣ A K Q 10 6

WEST
♠ 3 2
♥ K Q 10
♦ K 10 8 4
♣ 9 8 4 2

EAST
♠ A 8 7 6
♥ J 9 8 7 4
♦ J 9 2
♣ 7

SOUTH
♠ Q J 10 5
♥ A 5 3 2
♦ A Q
♣ J 5 3

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

Opening lead — ♥ K

Tribune Content Agency

ASK AMY

Boyfriend isn't great dad

Dear Amy: My boyfriend "Steve" and I have been together for over two years. He is extremely kind and generous to me. I can see a long-term future with him.

Steve is divorced with three children, ages 5 (a son, "A"), 7 (a daughter, "B") and 9 (a son, "C").

He and his ex-wife have an acrimonious relationship but have a loose agreement regarding the children. He gets the kids every other weekend and also sees them during the weekdays.

The issue is this: Steve openly favors the youngest, "A," and is openly disdainful of the middle child, "B."

I have spoken to him of the obvious favoritism and the mistreatment of his daughter. He then accuses me of favoring her.

When we get into arguments about the kids, he will blame the kids for me being upset and will punish them.

B recently confided in me that their mother threatened to take him to court if he didn't change his behavior toward them.

B has told both me and her mother about this favoritism, but Steve will staunchly deny it, even though multiple people have brought it to his attention.

I am worried that if he doesn't start acknowledging the deeper issues and rectifying his relationship with his daughter, his ex will take him to court (rightfully so).

I am also torn, wondering if I should stay with someone who refuses to accept any responsibility in conflict.

Conflicted

Dear Conflicted: No you should not stay with someone who refuses to accept any responsibility regarding conflicts, and who blames and punishes his children if you become upset.

Both of these parents seem flawed — using a 9-year-old to convey a message about pulling her father into court shows poor judgment on the mother's part.

You are someone outside these family units who nonetheless has an inside view and a valid point of view regarding these children.

Imagine the next 10 years with three kids growing into challenging adolescent and teen years, with you trying to mediate on their behalf between warring parents, with at least one of these parents unwilling to even consider altering his behavior.

You should be with someone who is willing to co-parent through conflict, because when it comes to stepparenting, if you don't work as a team, you don't work.

Dear Amy: My husband was recently diagnosed with cancer (for the second time).

While we have been assured that this is not a death sentence, we have an unpredictable journey ahead of us with tests, treatments, lifestyle changes and so on.

Would you please ask your readers not to dismiss news like this?

One person said to me, "Oh, that cancer is nothing!"

And I know people mean well when they say, "I know several people who have had cancer and they're fine."

What is even worse is one friend telling us about all of the people he knew with that cancer who later died.

Such comments don't help; they create anxiety for the patient and family.

Retired Professor

Dear Professor: I once watched someone dismiss a friend's obvious concern regarding a cancer diagnosis with the familiar: "I had a friend with that, and it's no big deal." This might seem helpful or reassuring to the speaker, but what they are doing is telling a very worried person that their feelings are not legitimate.

Email questions to Amy Dickinson at *askamy@amydickinson.com*.

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane

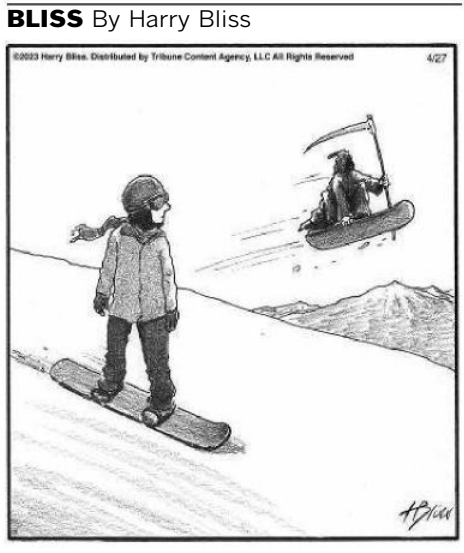
4-27
©2023 Bil Keane, Inc.
Dist. by King Features Synd.
www.familycircus.com
Bil and Jeff Keane
"We better start bein' good 'cause if we don't, I think Mommy might resign."

DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham

REPLY ALL LITE By Donna Lewis

MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson

BLISS By Harry Bliss



SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly

SOMETIMES I REGRET USING HIS NAME AS MY PASSWORD- EVERY TIME I FORGET IT, I HAVE TO CALL HIM SOMETHING NEW.
4-27
COPYRIGHT SPEEDBUMP.COM DIST. BY CREATORS

COMICS

LA CUCARACHA By Lalo Alcaraz

HEY, WANNA WATCH A MOVIE?
CAN'T. THEY ARE ALL PROPAGANDA.
GET SOME DRINKS?
ONLY IF YOU WANT TO SUPPORT DUD LITE, THE LATEST WOKE COMPANY.
NOT DUD LITE! WHERE WILL I GET WATERY BEER WITH A VINEGAR AFTERTASTE??
THE SEWER?

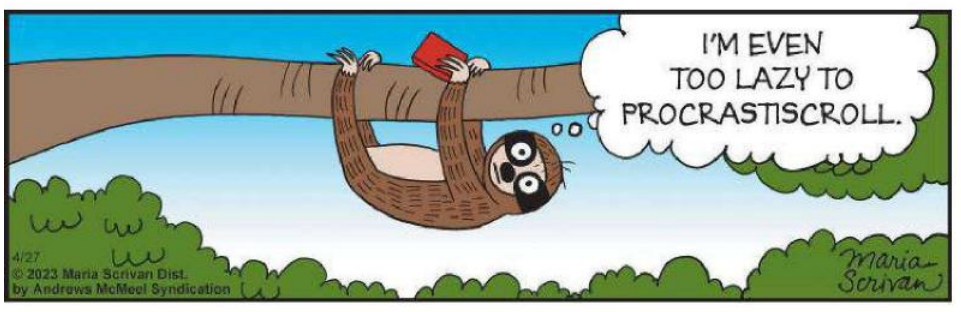
CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia

COME ON, GENE. MILES MAY HAVE RUN OFF, BUT AT LEAST WE KNOW WHERE TO.
WE DO?
OF COURSE. WHERE'S THE ONE PLACE HE'D FEEL SAFE BESIDES AT HOME?
AH, YES.
TACO KING™
KEVIN'S HOUSE.
I MEAN KEVIN'S HOUSE.
SERIOUSLY?
I THINK I'M JUST HUNGRY.

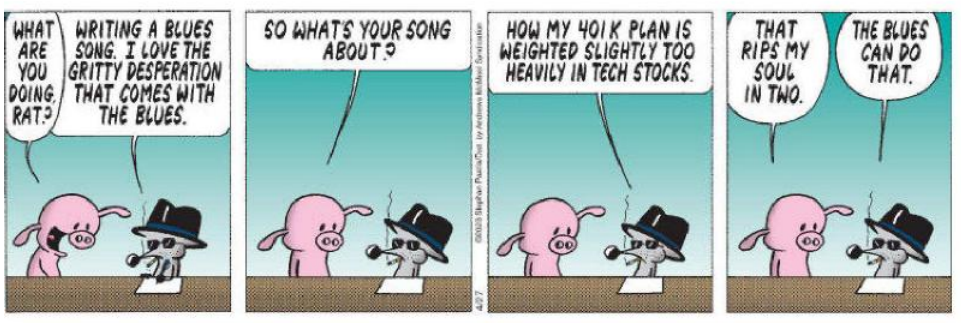
CANDORVILLE By Darrin Bell

WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
PLAYING A GAME.
SOMETIMES I NEED TO JUST SIT IN FRONT OF A COMPUTER AND PLAY A GAME INSTEAD OF DOING BORING ADULT STUFF.
I CAN GET A PRETTY BIG ENDORPHIN RUSH WHEN I TAP BUTTONS JUST FOR FUN WITH NO EXPECTATION THAT IT'LL MAKE ME ANY MONEY.
BUT... THAT'S ROBINHOOD. YOU'RE TRADING STOCKS. BADLY.
WHEN YOU SEE IT AS A GAME, IT HURTS A LOT LESS.

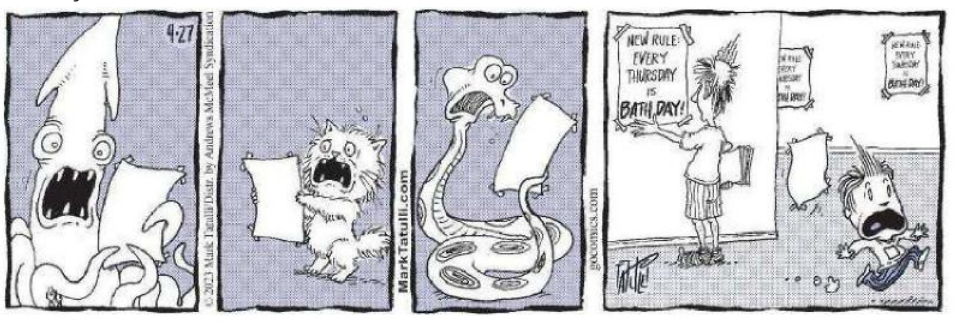
HALF FULL By Maria Scrivan



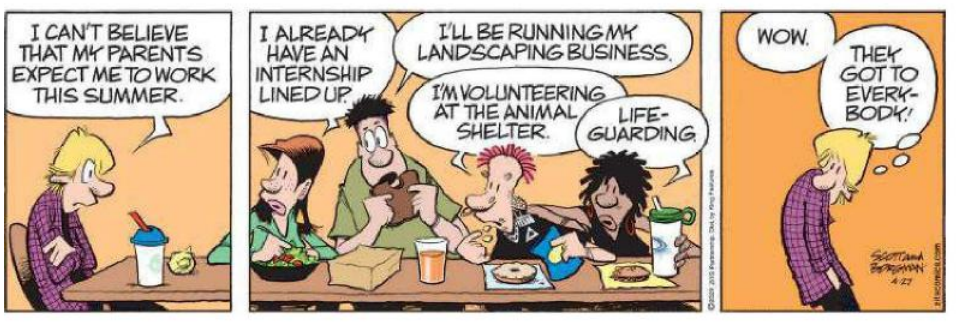
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis


WHAT ARE YOU DOING, RAT?
WRITING A BLUES SONG. I LOVE THE GRITTY DESPERATION THAT COMES WITH THE BLUES.
SO WHAT'S YOUR SONG ABOUT?
HOW MY 401K PLAN IS WEIGHTED SLIGHTLY TOO HEAVILY IN TECH STOCKS.
THAT RIPS MY SOUL IN TWO.
THE BLUES CAN DO THAT.

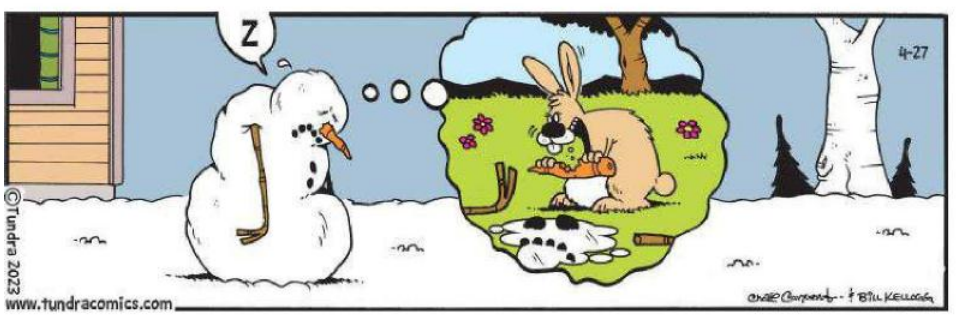
LIO By Mark Tatulli



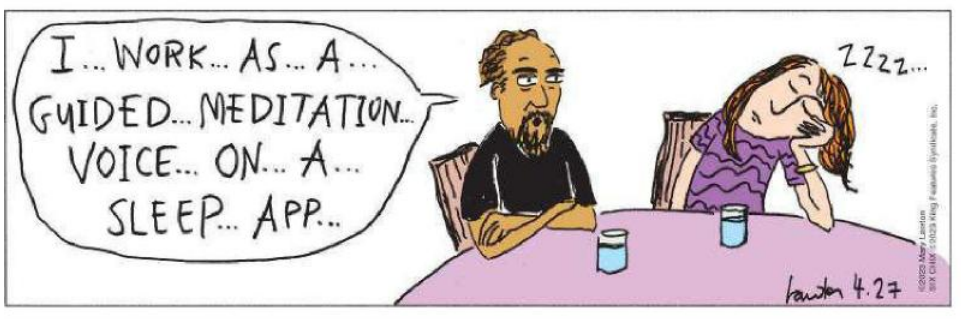
ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman


I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT MY PARENTS EXPECT ME TO WORK THIS SUMMER.
I ALREADY HAVE AN INTERNSHIP LINED UP.
I'LL BE RUNNING MY LANDSCAPING BUSINESS.
I'M VOLUNTEERING AT THE ANIMAL SHELTER.
LIFE-GUARDING.
WOW.
THEY GOT TO EVERY-BODY!

TUNDRA By Chad Carpenter



SIX CHIX By Mary Lawton



FRAZZ By Jef Mallett

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED HOW THEY PUT THE UNBROKEN POTATO CHIPS IN THE TOP OF THE BIG BAG?
THAT WAY YOU GET TO EAT THE BEST CHIPS FIRST, WHEN THEY'RE FRESHEST.
SOMEBODY WAS THINKING.
SOMEBODY IS OVERTHINKING.
4-27

NON SEQUITUR By Wiley

HOW'S YOUR ADULT BEHAVIOR RESEARCH GOING?
GREAT!
I'M REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO WHEN I GET TO DO ALL THE THINGS I DECLARE NO ONE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO DO...
...AND IF ANYONE QUESTIONS ME, I JUST SHUT THEM DOWN WITH AN INCESSANT TANTRUM
AND THAT'S DIFFERENT FOR YOU ...HOW?
BY BEING ABLE TO USE THE LEGAL SYSTEM
WILEY
GOCOMICS.COM

PICKLES By Brian Crane

OPAL TRIED A NEW CASSEROLE RECIPE TONIGHT.
SHE TASTED IT AND SAID "YUCK, THIS IS THE WORST CASSEROLE I'VE EVER MADE."
AND I, TRYING TO BE HELPFUL, SAID "NO, IT ISN'T, NOT BY A LONG SHOT."
HOW LONG WILL YOU BE LOCKED OUT?
WHO KNOWS?

BABY BLUES By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman

WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'M STANDING GUARD.
THERE'S BEEN TROUBLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD. SO I WANT TO BE READY.
TINK TINK
JUST BE SURE THAT YOU GIVE YOUR "HELMET" BACK TO MOM BEFORE SHE HAS TO DRAIN THE SPAGHETTI.
DUH! THAT'S WHY I BROUGHT A SPARE!

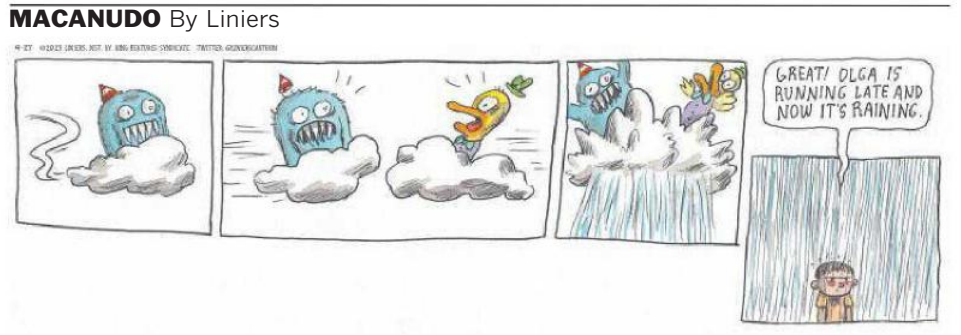
CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers

WE'RE HERE TO SEE OUR FELLOW SCHOOL BUS DRIVER, MARY CUMMINGS.
SHE'S STILL RECOVERING FROM DRIVING THE SENIOR CLASS TRIP...
SO WHATEVER YOU DO... DON'T SING 'A HUNDRED BOTTLES OF BEER ON THE WALL'!
4-27
BATIUK & DAVIS
tombatiuk.com/books

JUMP START By Robb Armstrong

IS IT SAFE TO GO BACK TO WORK NOW? THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
YES, DANA... BUT THERE'S ONE OTHER THING:
A SEVEN-THOUSAND DOLLAR FINE?! -FOR BURNING A SCENTED CANDLE?!
WOW. GOOD THING YOU'RE RICH!
SNIFF! GREEN APPLE GINGER?

MACANUDO By Liniers



BLONDIE By Dean Young & John Marshall

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO AFTER HIGH SCHOOL?
I WANT TO GO TO DAD'S ALMA MATER AND MAKE SOME LIFELONG FRIENDS
THEN I WANT TO LAND A PRETTY COOL JOB AND MAKE LOTS OF MONEY
BUT OBVIOUSLY, I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO LEAVE HOME TO DO ANY OF THAT STUFF
OBVIOUSLY
www.Blondie.com

BETWEEN FRIENDS By Sandra Bell-Lundy

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE HARD PART ABOUT "ACCEPTANCE" IS? IT'S NOT IN OUR NATURE
OUR BIOLOGICAL INSTINCT IS TO HANG ON... TO DIG IN... TO HOLD OUR GROUND!
IT'S HOW WE SURVIVE!!
WHEN IT DOESN'T KILL US
AW

BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro

Wayno & Piraro 4-27-23
If you subscribe to my podcast, your extraction comes with anesthesia.
BIZARRO.COM
Dist. by King Features

DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan

NEIL, YOU CANNOT DATE ECHO!
SHE'S THE GIRL I LOVE!
FINALLY!
4-27-23
ME, TOO, AND I WILL NOT LET HER GO WITHOUT A FIGHT!
FIGHT? I'M NOT A FIGHTER!
PUT 'EM UP!
HE MEANS YOUR FISTS!

MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell

PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz

WHAT IF THAT STUPID CAT NEXT DOOR ATTACKS ME DURING THE NIGHT?
MAYBE I SHOULD SLEEP WITH ONE EYE OPEN...
ONE EYE CAN SLEEP WHILE THE OTHER EYE STANDS GUARD...
I FEEL LIKE A STOP SIGN!

Purity rings don't fit now

CYNTHIA PARKHURST

THE JONAS BROTHERS (Nick, from left, Joe and Kevin) perform a "One Night Only" concert at downtown's Theatre at the Ace Hotel.

[**Jonas,** from E1]
eras of Britney Spears, Christina Aguilera, 'N Sync and the Backstreet Boys had come and gone, and those performers were now publicly expressing their sexuality. On MTV, "Total Request Live" was shifting youth focus to hip-hop and pop-punk. The Jonas Brothers, with their emo quaffs, skinny jeans and ability to play instruments, were a pop-punk boy-band for wholesome tween girls, a parent-approved contrast to the toilet humor of Blink-182 or the queer vaudevillian performance of Panic! at the Disco.

The JoBros mirrored the Christian morality of their showbiz sponsor, Disney (they were signed to the company's Hollywood Records), and of cultural thought at the time, a welcome alternative to a tabloid culture feasting on stories surrounding Spears' virginity. The JoBro era of kid-friendly celebrity included Selena Gomez, Miley Cyrus and Hilary Duff, a roster of young starlets willing to showcase their religious leanings by wearing purity rings and preaching celibacy, a not-so-thinly veiled extension of President George W. Bush's Abstinence Education Program, which gave federal funding to faith-based sex education organizations at the time.

What may register today like the political talking points of an evangelical group was then status quo, and the Jonas Brothers were made for the moment: They were sons of a pastor and already part of a purity program called True Love Waits. They participated until, of course, they didn't. Maybe the writing was always on the wall: Nick's silver band was engraved with the '00s slang "PONED," meaning "punk'd" or "owned." Eventually, the guys removed their rings. And the girls who loved them followed suit.

At the Ace, the long-tail legacy of the JoBros' purity movement appeared only briefly: in the line "Modesty is just so hard to find," from the 2008 single "Lovebug," and in the unfortunate protest of a stranger with an amp standing directly outside the concert hall, shouting at attendees standing in line before doors opened, denouncing satanists and "promiscuous women" who fail to attract "quality partners."

The language is archaic — and in the case of "Lovebug," largely unexamined under the rose-colored glasses of nostalgia. But those early held JoBro beliefs juxtapose well with the band's new tracks, full of lyrical tropes about parenthood and heartwarming hooks such as on the twangy "Montana Sky," which registered live like a pop-rock band writing a Laurel Canyon record.

The Jonas Brothers in 2023 offer cool adult-contemporary sounds for an audience that grew up with them, similarly navigating the life that emerges once you begin to individuate, become intimate and start families. It's a feat for anyone, but in particular, a boy band — a role often treated like a pop-culture death sentence.

Just a decade ago, the Jonas Brothers were on the verge of collapse. Publicly, they appeared to be at the top of their game: They landed starring roles as the fictional pop-rock band Connect 3 in the Disney films "Camp Rock" (2008) and "Camp Rock 2" (2010); between the two, they filmed two seasons of "Jonas," a parodic comedy series about their "real" lives.

The latter, as Nick would later reveal in the 2019 Amazon documentary "Chasing Happiness," "really stunted our growth. ... Literally, we couldn't evolve because of it." In 2013, the band went on indefinite hiatus (Nick's decision), eventually reuniting in 2019 (also Nick's). When they did, they managed the impossible, scoring the first No. 1 song of their career, "Sucker."

That song concluded the Jonas' set, but "Sucker" did not prompt the loudest singalong of the evening — that came during 2007's "That's Just the Way We Roll" and "S.O.S.," or when the die-hards in the crowd performed the oft-forgotten rap from 2008's "Burnin' Up." (The original version includes a verse from their bodyguard at the time, Big Rob.)

Those older songs are the ones fans memorized in middle school, before streaming distracted them with limitless choice. In that regard, the Jonas Brothers may be the very last of their kind: a boy band able to thrive both pre-streaming and post-internet, capitalizing on nostalgia and attempting to create outside of it — and adjusting to adulthood all the while.

Maria Sherman is the author of "Larger Than Life: A History of Boy Bands from NKOTB to BTS."

ETHAN MILLER Getty Images

DENIS VILLENEUVE, left, Zendaya and Timothée Chalamet were on hand to promote their upcoming "Dune: Part Two" during Warner Bros.' presentation.

Getting back to theaters

[**CinemaCon,** from E1]
under threat during the COVID-19 crisis, as studios experimented with bypassing theaters in favor of streaming, or releasing movies in cinemas and online at the same time. Those practices have largely fallen out of favor as the box office has made a comeback.

The motion picture business "can be bigger and stronger than it has ever been," Zaslav said.

The mood at this year's confab was undeniably upbeat, coming three years after the COVID-19 pandemic decimated the industry. Recently, though, films such as "The Super Mario Bros. Movie" have done huge business.

One thing that has been lacking is a large volume of new releases in theaters, but studios said at the convention that those numbers will be increasing soon, pushing box office higher.

"Our epitaph has been written many, many times, and it's never turned out that way," John Fithian, the outgoing chief executive of the National Assn. of Theatre Owners, said at a news conference.

In 2022, on a per-movie basis, releases performed as well or better than they did in 2019, and the box office could return to pre-pandemic levels soon, Fithian predicted. "I have no doubt that in the next couple of years, we will exceed and go beyond the 2019 numbers," he said.

That's a bold prediction, in line with typical CinemaCon optimism.

But companies like Warner Bros. Discovery are promising to increase the number of films they release in theaters, helping to buoy exhibitors' hopes. Zaslav said this year Warner Bros. will release 16 movies in theaters and plans to exceed that in the future.

"We see very much increasing theatrical distribution from all of our key partners, and that's the first time in my 30 years of representing theater owners I can say that," Fithian said. "We are incredibly bullish."

On Tuesday, Warner Bros. screened its upcoming DC film "The Flash," which has been mired in controversy because of the offscreen behavior of its star, Ezra Miller.

Speaking about the film earlier in the day, Zaslav told conference attendees it was the best superhero movie he has seen, and that he has seen it three times.

Warner Bros. rolled out its big stars to promote a robust slate of upcoming releases, including Oprah and Taraji P. Henson for "The Color Purple," Margot Robbie for "Barbie," Timothée Chalamet for "Wonka" and Zendaya for "Dune: Part Two," as well as new releases from Warner Bros.' DC universe presented by new DC Studios chiefs James Gunn and Peter Safran. Miller was not present for the presentation.

Sony Pictures previewed its new Marvel feature "Kraven the Hunter," a new "Ghostbusters" movie and video game adaptation "Gran Turismo." It also showed off new clips of an Apple original movie, Ridley Scott's "Napoleon," which Sony will distribute worldwide with a "robust theatrical window," according to Sony's motion picture chairman, Tom Rothman.

Rothman got in a requisite barb at streaming services, which have lately come under Wall Street pressure to show a path to profitability.

"Streaming doesn't create movie stars," Rothman told a crowd of theater operators. "Only global hit movies do."

From the first day, when CinemaCon Managing Director Mitch Neuhauser walked onstage to Elton John's "I'm Still Standing," the message has been one of defying the odds. "We are all still standing after three years, after all the garbage we've gone through," Neuhauser said. "We are back."

CinemaCons before the pandemic were often overshadowed by studios' efforts to get movies into consumers' homes faster.

Not this time.

Fithian recalled in his tenure several industry conflicts over windowing. "That's not happening," he said.

Instead, theaters now accept that windows might vary depending on the film, with some ranging from a few weeks to many months. "There is no one size fits all," Fithian said.

One cloud on the horizon is the potential for a strike by members of the Writers Guild of America this summer, which could slow down film production and releases.

"I don't think anybody in the industry wants to come out of a pandemic, get back to regrowth ... and have another disruption," said Michael O'Leary, incoming president of the theater owners association.

Still brimming with questions

[**'Margaret,'** from E1]
Edge of Seventeen," and with "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret," for which she also wrote the screenplay, she delivers a wonderfully lived-in family dramedy about religion and sexuality and the importance of girls' stories. It's a film that is both warmly entertaining and downright revolutionary, considering the current state of discourse and legislation about women's bodies in our country.

'Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret'

Rated: PG-13, for thematic material involving sexual education and some suggestive material

Running time: 1 hour, 45 minutes

Playing: Starts Friday in general release

We first meet Margaret (Abby Ryder Fortson) at summer camp, a utopia of gloriously embodied girlhood: swimming, jumping, laughing, eating with her friends, the girls fully expressing a sense of liberated, uninhibited joy in their bodies, unscrutinized and unimpeded by outside forces.

This montage is a brilliant introduction to the story, emphasizing the rude awakening Margaret experiences when she's ripped from her childhood home, a cozy, bohemian Manhattan apartment, and deposited across the river in a New Jersey suburb, separated from her dear grandmother Sylvia (Kathy Bates). It's an upwardly mobile move that nevertheless leaves the Simon family floundering for their identities — Barbara (Rachel McAdams) struggles to be a good housewife, while dad Herb (Benny Safdie) flails at yard work, and Margaret must wade into the lion's den that is the sixth grade, with all its attendant gender politics.

A bewildered Margaret is thrown into the gantlet of adolescence via her new neighbor, the unabashed and bold Nancy (Elle Graham), who introduces our heroine to bust-increasing exercises and the necessity of practicing kissing on a bedpost. In Nancy's "secret club" (no socks allowed), Margaret finds a much-needed group of allies and a supposed safe space in which the girls talk with anxiety and excitement about the realities of puberty. But Nancy rules with an iron fist, fomenting a toxic dynamic of competition and bullying.

Much of "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret" is about the private and often confusing physical details of changing bodies and the harrowing journey of navigating these transitions in relation to other people. But it's also about the way that Margaret develops as a person — intellectually, morally and spiritually. With a Jewish father and a Christian mother who raise her in a religious void, her teacher, Mr. Benedict (Echo Kellum), suggests Margaret do a research project on the subject of religion.

She tries out temple to the delight of Sylvia, as well as a Southern Baptist church, a Protestant Christmas Eve Mass and even dabbles in Catholic confession. All the while, she chats with God about her innermost thoughts and feelings, processing the complexities of her social and family life. Whether or not she believes, Margaret's "God" is a confidant and friend that exists outside the power struggles and religious divisions that have shaped her family life for better or for worse.

Fremon Craig brings a fluidity and easy rhythm to the film, which is highly specific to its 1970 setting but fresh and contemporary too. It remains true to the book but also highlights that so many of these questions and issues remain the same, five decades later.

Steve Saklad's rich and detailed production design immerses us in this world, bursting with macramé and houseplants and tapestries, but it also tells a story in the Teenage Softies sanitary napkins or the disastrous living room that Barbara stalls in furnishing.

And the people populating this film make it beautifully real and moving.

Fortson brings Margaret's tweenage anxiety to vivid life as she struggles to figure out who and how she is in the world. Graham is hilarious and heartbreaking as the ostensible antagonist, her outsize bravura punctured by a wrenching moment of true vulnerability. As Margaret's loving but frazzled parents, McAdams and Safdie are remarkably sincere, discrete characters in their own right.

Fremon Craig updates Blume's classic text while maintaining the authenticity and intimacy with which so many readers connected. She draws out themes that feel as trenchant as ever, especially the essential truth that bodies, in all their mysterious and unruly ways, cannot be controlled, not by ourselves and not by others. Our bodies — ourselves — are ours alone, as are our actions, our lives and our stories. "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret" proves to be a powerful and moving reminder of this crucial life lesson that can be all too easy to forget.

Katie Walsh is a Tribune News Service film critic.

DANA HAWLEY Lionsgate

WHILE Abby Ryder Fortson's Margaret seeks answers, so does her mom, played by Rachel McAdams.